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ABSTRACT

A pilot adult basic education (ABE) language experience curriculum was designed and implemented with older adults in Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania. The objectives were to improve writing skills, to increase self-esteem, and to create a historical record of the area as seen through the eyes of the average older citizen who had lived through many eras. The writings were compiled into a book written by a cross-section of people. The book will become a component of selected social studies curricula throughout the county and will also be available at a local store. As a result of the project, the average reading gain was .4; the pre- and postcourse writing samples showed an average improvement of 12 points; and a self-esteem survey increased from pre- to postadministration by an average of 15 points. Evaluation of the project revealed that the senior citizens were motivated by a desire to share their experiences, not by a need for academic gain, and they tended to remain in the class only as long as they were interested (the course enrollment dropped from 30 to 13 during the project). However, some students were extremely enthusiastic. (The document includes the writing sample evaluation scale, a self-esteem survey, a curriculum synopsis, and the book of reminiscences produced during the project.) (KC)

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The Platinum Historical Literacy Class

A 353 Project Final Report

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The Platinum Historical Literacy Class

A 353 Project Final Report

Submitted by: Lyn Leto
Coordinator of Special Services
Schuylkill Intermediate Unit 29

Fiscal Year: 1992-1993

Grantee: Schuylkill Intermediate Unit 29
P.O. Box 130, Maple Avenue
Mar Lin, Pa 17951-0130

Federal Grant: $12,357.00
Project Number: 98-3037

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ABSTRACT

Senior citizens comprise an increasingly larger sector of the American population and can exert a positive impact on many aspects of society. If older adults improve their skills, their self-esteem will grow, and with this growth, a corresponding increase in them desire to take an active role in their neighborhoods. If older adults become more skilled in an academic area, the cultural I.Q. of the community must improve.

Using these concepts as a philosophical foundation, we conceived The Platinum Historical Literacy Class. Senior citizens, functioning on the ABE level as measured by the TABE reading subtest, would enroll in a class in order to improve their reading and writing skills. The class would be based on a language experience approach to drawing on the students' personal historical knowledge and memories of "the average person". While the primary goal was to improve the literacy skills of a class of senior citizens, a corollary objective was to increase the self-esteem of senior citizens by providing the opportunity for them to make a personal contribution to their county. This contribution would materialize in the form of a book of the students' original writings to be used as an adjunct historical record of the area.

A pilot ABE language experience curriculum was designed and implemented with Schuylkill County senior citizens. The objectives were to improve writing skills, to increase self-esteem and to create an historical record of the area as seen through the eyes of the average older citizen who lived through past eras -- the rise and fall of the anthracite economy, the depression, nuclear or extended family mores, and practices, recreational practices, dating and much more. These writings were compiled into a book as written by a cross-section of people who lived it. The book will become a component of selected Social Studies curricula throughout the county and will also be available at the Lifelong Learning Center Store located in the Schuylkill County Mall in Frackville, PA.

INTRODUCTION

Schuylkill County has experienced a growing interest in improving basic literacy skills as well as the occupational-specific skills germane to the workplace. This is an observation verifiable through an examination of the growing number of adults enrolling in all of the Schuylkill Intermediate Unit's adult basic and literacy education classes. Another county demographic reveals that Schuylkill County houses a disproportionately large senior citizen population. When one views literacy from an holistic perspective, these two bits of county data can achieve a relational significance.

A review of the literacy class records reveal that, as is the trend throughout the county, the majority of Schuylkill County adults who attended our classes were young adults. However, adults 60 years of age and over comprised the greatest number of people who did not attend school past the eighth grade. Therefore, our literacy promotion campaigns have little or no effect on this group of county adults.

The Plantinum Historical Literacy Class evolved from two tenets which were drawn from the literacy data under discussion:

1. Senior Citizens also need basic literacy skills
2. Improving the literacy levels of senior citizens will have a trickle-down effect on county residents of all ages.

The Schuylkill Mall is the center of social life for most county adults, including senior citizens. Therefore, volunteers went to the mall during several afternoons of a three-week period in order to solicit senior attitudes towards the proposed class. Armed with the positive responses towards this project, the project idea took flight.

The project coordinator and the instructor planned the curriculum between August and October, 1992. Since the class was to be conducted at The Lifelong Learning Center located in The Schuylkill Mall, the basics of the recruitment campaign took place there. High-school age vocational students manned tables throughout the mall and distributed flyers advertising the class. This was done during September and October and periodically throughout the class's tenure. In addition, one major county newspaper highlighted the innovative class in a feature story, while other newspapers carried news articles. One major avenue of recruitment was major citizen centers, which the Project Coordinator visited as an invited speaker.

Senior citizens entered the class with a reading level of 0-8, and with the motivation of performing a community service for county youth. The end product of the course was slated to be a book of the seniors' original writings based on their reminiscences about the past as they experienced it.

Our wish is that other communities concerned about the large number of senior citizens who have many years ahead of them due to advanced technologies in the health field, will give consideration to the premise espoused herein. We will consider this project a great success if literacy providers devote a portion of their efforts to increasing seniors' quality of life through the joys of literacy.

The Division of Adult Basic and Literacy Education Programs
The Pennsylvania Department of Education
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

AdvancE
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333 Market Street - 11th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

THE BODY OF THE REPORT

Medical science has long been concerned with increasing the life span of homo sapiens. A perusal of the pertinent statistics will demonstrate that advances in pre-natal, pediatric, geriatric, and overall medical care have far exceeded the numerical benchmark of even 40 years ago. Improved medical care, combined with increased health knowledge and advanced technologies have assured most of us a longer life than our grandparents and a life consisting of more healthy and active years.

Our culture has, for some time, been concerned with the increased leisure time of senior citizens. A Pandora's box of trips, cruises, dance lessons, dinner theatres, and other recreational opportunities is open to this population. However, this group is not targeted for literacy growth, and with some logic. After all, this is not the group that society is depending on to form the backbone of our workplace.

However, there are other issues worth considering. Do studies of self-esteem indicate that a surfeit of leisure activities help to maintain high self-esteem? Is human growth important to self-esteem at any age? Can a literate society exist with a whole class of that society lacking literacy skills? Can people who are not part of the workplace still be a valuable resource to the community? Can a purpose in life increase self-esteem? Can literate senior citizens be a community resource?

Given the increased life span of today's senior citizens, and given the societal concerns of literacy beyond application in the workplace, we decided that delving into a literacy endeavor directed at improving skills of senior citizens was valid and important.

In order to serve the literacy needs of a growing, but socially and educationally disenfranchised population, we set the following goals and objectives:

1. Illustrate to senior citizens that they are a valuable community resource
2. Provide the opportunity for senior citizens to provide a community service through providing a social history of the county through their personal reminiscences, available to county citizens in a book
3. To stress the values of literacy to all citizens, regardless of age
4. To improve the reading skills of senior citizens functioning on the ABE level
5. To improve the writing skills of senior citizens functioning on the ABE level

The evaluation instruments are:

1. The TABE Reading test
2. Writing samples
3. A Self-esteem scale (included in report)

RESULTS

The average reading gain as measured by the TABE was .4

The pre and post course writing samples showed an average improvement of 12 points

The Self-Esteem Survey increased from pre and post administration by an average of 15 points

OBSERVATIONS

1. Each senior citizen who participated in the course was motivated by the desire to share their memories with younger generations. No one had a desire to improve from an academic standpoint. Each one had a desire to do better in order to ensure that their work, prepared for public consumption, would be the best that could be.

2. The instructor noted that the senior citizens comprised one of the most interesting classes that she has ever taught. However, they also posed several interesting dilemmas: When engaged in an activity that they liked, they were enthusiastic. However, if anyone tired of the task, that person would simply leave for the day, excusing himself/herself by voicing a need for medicine, food, drink, need to sit for grand kids, etc.. In other words, the motivation of many work-age people of economic betterment was missing and noticeable, at least with this particular group of senior citizens.

3. These students tended to attend class in pairs, and would not attend if the friend could not attend. This was not associated with transportation problems, but appeared to be a social concern.

4. This particular population found it difficult to sit down and face a blank paper. However, they were very talkative. Therefore, the instructor found that the use of a tape recorder was invaluable in eliminating "writer's block." Each student would record his/her story, transcribe it (which was time consuming), and then re-write.

5. Although pre-course surveys indicated senior-citizen enthusiasm, and course enrollment topped at 30, the retention rate was poor. Only thirteen students remained with the project, but these adults were extremely enthusiastic and loyal.

6. The Project Director and the instructor noticed during recruitment campaign many potential program participants evidenced trepidation at the thought of class, after having been away from school so long. They also voiced the opinion prevalent in our culture that education was not relevant to older people.

PROJECT 353 1992 - 93

THE PLATINUM HISTORICAL LITERACY CLASS

WRITING SAMPLE EVALUATION SCALE

	POINTS
Goal Appropriate	10
Adherence to Topic	10
Sentence Development	10
Paragraph Development	10
Syntax	10
Clarity of Expression	10
Punctuation	5
Creativity in Style and Expression	5
Aptness of Title	5
Legibility	5
Spelling	5
TOTAL	90

COURSE SURVEY

(Self-Esteem Survey was labeled" course" survey)

(True or False)

_____ 1. I am proud of my age.

_____ 2. I believe that I am better today than ever before.

_____ 3. I think that I am special because my experiences are different from everyone else's.

_____ 4. I look forward to tomorrow because there is so much that I want to do.

_____ 5. I believe that other people usually like me.

_____ 6. I think that I could have gone to college if things had been different when I was a kid. Half of the students mentioned that they felt more confident about writing letters or notes to people, especially to grandchildren in college.

_____ 7. I thinks that a lot of people value my opinion.

_____ 8. I feel very comfortable when writing a letter.

_____ 9. I take care in how I look.

_____ 10. I believe that the world is a better place because I am in it. All of the students admitted to never having read a complete book before this course, and 4 of them were in the process of reading a book at the course's end.

The Self-Evaluation Survey is scored by giving one point for every "True" statement. Therefore, the score will be 0 - 10, with registering a high self- esteem, 0 equaling little or no self-esteem.

Therefore, in gauging growth, a "6" on the pre-test and an "8" on the post-test shows a growth of "2" or 20%, while an "8" on the pre-test and a "6" on the post-test indicate a diminution of "2" or 20% in the student's self-esteem.

ATTENTION: Schuylkill County Senior Citizens!

Share your own experiences of what life was like "in the good old days" in Schuylkill County — dating, working, being married, raising a family, shopping, living through the depression, mining coal, going to school — with our county youngsters. Contribute your thoughts to a book that will be available in our schools.

Find out more about the Plantinum Historical Literacy Club —

When: Monday, 10:00 A.M. — October 26, 1992
Where: The New American Classroom, located in the Schuylkill Mall (next to Hess's Department Store), Frackville

CURRICULUM GUIDE

Due to the independent nature of the class, as noted under "Observations" in the final report, the curriculum took on a day-by-day, student-directed course of study. Students had definite ideas of what they liked to do, what they wanted to do, and what they agreed to do. For example, as a method of stimulating discussion, critical thinking, and, hence, thought flow for composition, the project director and the instructor used, quite successfully one week, The National Issues Forum, Crime component. However, even though this method led to reaching instructional objectives, and the senior classmembers appeared to be enthusiastic, a future attempt at the same format brought failure. Students simply refused any further activity of this nature. Project participants were most happy with the following format:

1. A brief group reading from Contemporary's "Amazing Century". This series is composed of brief accounts of historical events. The students enjoyed the stories, and this exercise jogged memories into action. This basic daily procedure came to be expected and enjoyed as "our class."
2. Most of the class took advantage of the opportunity to record their stories on tape, and then to play back and to write their compositions. This tactic helped defeat writer's block at times. Some students continued throughout the course to use this method, while others found the writing process easier to begin as the course proceeded. This practice led to an unplanned gain to students. The instructor noted that 80% of the students began to display increased facility and clarity of oral communications.

3. The instructor taught grammar rules "as needed." In other words, the instructor set up individual conferencing in order to facilitate writing improvement. The instructor would teach and assign practice exercises using the individual student's needs, revealed through writing samples. When a pattern of grammatical weakness emerged, the facilitator conducted large-group remediation.

4. The curriculum utilized the following materials:

    a. The TABE reading component, pre and post test
    b. Writing Evaluation Scale pre and post test
    c. Self-Esteem survey, pre and post test
    d. Contemporary's Amazing Century Series
    e. The Foxfire Series
    f. Steck Vaughn's Language Exercises Review
    g. Language Exercise Review Books

A Rememberance of Times Past In Schuylkill County

Personal Anecdotes by the Senior Citizens of the Platinum Historical Literacy Class

A 353 Project sponsored by the Schuylkill Intermediate Unit 29
through a grant provided by the
Pennsylvania Department of Education

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AND LITERACY EDUCATION

A REMEMBRANCE OF TIMES PAST IN SCHUYLKILL COUNTY

Personal Anecdotes

by the

Senior Citizens

of the

Platinum Historical Literacy Club

(A 353 Project sponsored by Pennsylvania Department of Education)

This book was made possible by a grant awarded to the Schuylkill Intermediate Unit #29 by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, 353 Demonstration Project, Adult Basic Education and Literacy Program, 1992-1993.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE TEACHER:

I really enjoyed spending time with a few **"Special Seniors"** these last few months. One of my favorite sayings goes, **"Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat its mistakes."** We spent many pleasant afternoons reliving days gone-by and taking lessons from the past. I've learned so many interesting facts that have enriched my family and friends. I'm sure anyone who reads this book will be equally blessed by the wealth of experience expressed here.

Enjoy!!

Ms. Kathy Vaughn
Instructor

PREFACE

Schuylkill County owes a debt of gratitude to the senior citizens who participated in the Schuylkill Intermediate Unit's Platinum Historical Literacy Class, held at The Lifelong Learning Center at the Schuylkill Mall, between October, 1992 through May, 1993. The students in this class participated in a project aimed at improving their writing skills in order to present the residents of Schuylkill County with a very personal history book.

The end product of their efforts is this book, and it is an invaluable gift to current and future young county citizens as a tool to learning about "everyday" life in a different era. It is also an invaluable gift to other senior citizens. To them, this book can be a visit with friends from the old neighborhood.

These personal reminiscences are now part of a literary "time capsule," an intimate social adjunct to the history books. The reader will discover that "the good ol' days" were not always so good. Some memories must have been difficult to relive, while others must have offered the temptation to linger a while. Nevertheless, the youth or adult who decides to meander down this particular memory lane will learn how very different the past was, and how very much the same.

As project director, I had planned to send this book to print organized into aptly-titled chapters. However, a trusted staff member insisted that the book had a particular charm as written. I decided to reread the tome with a new mindset.

Doffing my "professional" hat, I now read the book and I "heard" the stories from the perspective of a child sitting at a grandparent's knee. I "heard" it as a friend, fondly enjoying a long anticipated reunion. And, then I knew.

This work does not want professional editing. Artificial chapter divisions would be intrusive. The senior storyteller reflects on the past's rich memories in a stream-of-consciousness technique--not topic to topic, but anecdote to anecdote, with the heart's own labyrinthine logic. The senior storyteller spins the tales of a full life to be enjoyed by the listener, stopping only now and then for a tear or a chuckle. It is appropriate to read these stories in the same spirit.

Lyn Leto
Project Director
August, 1993

THE PLATINUM HISTORICAL LITERACY CLASS
1992 - 1993

OUR GENERATION

Musings

To all those born before 1945, we are survivors! Consider the changes we have witnessed:

We were born before television, penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, plastic, contact lenses, Frisbees and the pill.

We were here before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ball-point pens, before panty hose, dishwashers, clothes dryers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes -- and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first and then lived together. How quaint can you be?

In our time, closets were for clothes, not for "coming out of." Bunnies were small rabbits and rabbits were not Volkswagons. Designer jeans were scheming girls named Jean or Jeanne, and having a meaningful relationship meant getting along well with our cousins.

We thought fast food was what you ate during Lent, and outer space was the back of the Roxy Theatre.

We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, electric typewriters, artificial hearts, word processors, yogurt and guys wearing earrings. For us, time-sharing meant togetherness; a "chip" meant a piece of wood; hardware meant hardware and software wasn't even a word!

In 1940 "Made in Japan" meant junk and Pizzas, McDonald's and instant coffee were unheard of.

We hit the scene when there were "5 and 10 Cent Stores", where you bought things for five and 10 cents. For a nickel you could ride a street car, make a phone call, buy a Pepsi or enough stamps to mail one letter and two postcards. You could buy a new Chevy coupe for $600, but who could afford one? A pity, too, because gas was 11 cents a gallon!

In our day, cigarette smoking was fashionable, grass was mowed, Coke was a cold drink and pot was something you cooked in. Rock music was a Grandma's lullaby and aids were helpers in the principal's office.

No wonder we are so confused and there is a generation gap today!

But we survived! What better reason to celebrate!

Unnamed
The Pottsville Republican

Modern Homemaking

TEN CENTS A COPY MAY 1928

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HOME HEATING

Our home on the farm was a big old rambling house near Buery's Grove with five big rooms downstairs and six bedrooms upstairs -- of course, no central heat, no electricity and no indoor plumbing for many years. We had a big "heatrola", a square coal-fired furnace type, which heated the dining room and, if the weather was not too cold, the living room. The kitchen was heated by a coal stove which had a fire-box in the top front portion with lids on. On the lower level was the oven with no temperature controls. What "fun" trying to guess when to put your cake, pies, or bread in to bake!!

My father put a grate covered opening above both the kitchen stove and the heatrola so heat would go up to warm the bedrooms. Needless to say, most nights we just dashed upstairs through a freezing hallway and jumped into bed. (We had to get washed and into our night clothes in the kitchen). Most winter nights, Mother would put bricks in the oven to heat, then wrap them in towels and place them under the covers at the foot of the bed. How cozy we felt!

Catherine Kemple

* * * * * * * * *

HAVING BABIES

Most of the babies that my mother had were born at home. We had a midwife. It was only for the last two girls in our family who were born that my mother had a doctor. I remember the neighbors getting together, and at that time you had the cloth diapers. When you washed those diapers they were to be hung out in the sunshine and the air. You never let the diaper hang out overnight because the moon would shine on them. There was some kind of superstition there, but I can't think of what it was. You did not allow a newborn baby to look into a mirror; you did not hold a newborn baby in front of a mirror, you did not cut that baby's fingernails until it was a year old; you did not cut its hair until it was a year old. I can remember a next door neighbor had a baby at 10 o'clock in the morning, and at 1 o'clock in the afternoon she was hanging out clothes.

Helen Nash

* * * * * *

FLOOR COVERING

Another very interesting thing, we had a bare floor in one room and my mother at that time would take pieces of old shirts or any kind of cloth and cut them into strips and sit there sewing those strips together. Then she would roll them in a big ball and she would get so many balls and then she would take them over to somebody who wove these things into carpets. She took these long strips and laid them along side one another in the room, tacked them down and that was the covering for your floor. We didn't have a sweeper. There was no sweeper in those days for the poor, so my mother would go out when she felt the carpet needed cleaning and she would go out into the yard, pluck up a small head of cabbage, come in and dice it up real fine. Naturally the cabbage was moist. She would then scatter that cabbage over the length of that room over that rug and take a good stiff broom. in those days you bought good stiff brooms, not like they are today. She would sweep, and as she swept that cabbage rolled all that dust, because it was moist; that carpet looked as fresh and clean as you would ever want to see.

Helen Nash

COMING HOME

My Mother left Poland. I think it was in 1903. She crossed the ocean in nine days and landed at Ellis Island in New York and was met by her sister. She always remarked about ice cream. She never had eaten it until she was on the boat coming to the United States. Her sister was married and had been here. She left my Mother there at Ellis Island. Luckily, there was a very nice woman who took my Mother and got her work doing housework in New York City. She lived there for a while. She met my father and moved to Coaldale, Pennsylvania.

When she applied for citizenship we had to get the records from the Immigration Bureau as to what ship she came in on, and what year it was. My Mother was here for quite a long time. If my father had applied for his citizenship in 1923, then automatically his wife would have become a citizen. However, my father had gotten his before 1923.

Ann Tempest

* * * * * *

THIS AND THAT

My Mother and Father were of true Lithuanian decent. My Father came across first, and after two years he sent for my Mother and brought her over here. Listening to the stories that my Mother used to tell, I learned that when they were old enough, children were farmed out to people who had big farms and who were wealthy. When they worked out in the fields they had to behave and listen to the bosses, because that person was in charge of them. You did not dare talk back. They were taught to respect their elders which is very lacking in this world today. I have heard youngsters walking in the mall or elsewhere saying, "look at that old lady," and perhaps the person is no more than 60 years of age. They considered her an old person. They do not realize that as time goes by they will become 60. This is such a changing world and I look back on my childhood days.

My childhood days were very happy. My Mother spoke to us in Lithuanian in the house, so therefore, English was doubly hard for us to learn when we went to school. The teachers taught so many interesting things. The first thing we did when we got in school was Pledge Allegiance to the Flag which was wonderful. I still Pledge my Allegiance to the Flag. Then she would have us sing a song and it was always **Columbia, The Gem of the Ocean** in fifth grade. All those nice things that have been taken away from our schools is very sad. We are losing all the nice things of life. We had such pleasure in the simple things in life.

Helen Nash

SWEET SCHOOL MEMORIES

We had to walk about a mile to Green's School, which was an 8 grade one-room building. My favorite memory is of cold, snowy winter lunch hours, when our teacher would sit us around a big pot-bellied stove and read Little Women to us. It took many a lunch hour to get through that book. It was so very enjoyable.

My memory is of deep snow on the ground all winter long. Some days the sun would thaw the top layer, then refreeze at night. This thawing and refreezing would form a crust which we could walk on. One morning on our way to school, my sister broke through the crust!! What a time we had to get her out.

Catherine Kemple

* * * * * *

SCHOOLING

I did not finish the 8th grade in school. Years later I had a couple of opportunities to go back. It was during the Depression and I was 14 and I could get a job. That was in 1928, and then I worked for a year or so until I lost my job, but by then I was away from school and I didn't like school to begin with. Going back only made me shutter. So that was one of the reasons that I stayed out of school. Later on it became apparent to me that I really needed an education. When I began to work and become a little independent, I made it my business to study courses. I took courses in English, courses in Math and various other things. They say that I am not educated, but in fact one company that I worked for made me a district manager. I was also a home office representative for several companies. Many people tried to interest me in going for an equivalency test or to go to college, but I never bothered with that. I decided that as long as I knew what I was doing, it didn't matter what anyone else thought.

Bill Lynagh

* * * * * *

SCHOOL WAS DIFFERENT

We used chalk and book-sized slates instead of paper and pencils to do our lessons. The older children had ink-wells in the top right hand corner of the desk and pens were dipped into the ink to do their "penmanship". Supplies were few so everyone had to be frugal. The school had no electricity or indoor plumbing. On a cloudy day no one could see too well to do their work and the "lavatory" was a booth-like building in back of the school, very miserable on cold winter or hot fall days.

Catherine Kemple

THE WAY IT WAS

It amazes me today to see the number of students using calculators today. When we went to school, there weren't any such things as calculators. We had to think and think hard to do multiplication, and all math, and therefore it stayed in our minds and we were able to think clearly and really do arithmetic. I, for one, know that I was very good at it. I could add a column of figures without any problem at all, even before a calculator could do it. We had spelling bees in school and the children that where chosen to go into the spelling bee where given words that sometimes were very hard. But it made you think - made you work your mind. You did not have an idle mind those days, you weren't allowed to. I loved spelling. I loved school. We were taught to behave in school. There was no such thing as running for coke every 10 minutes. There was no such thing of running to the bathroom every 5 minutes. You listened and you learned. I was very sorry that I was not able to go back to school after leaving school when I was promoted in the Sophomore year. I had to get out, get a job, and help support the family. We had 10 children in the family.

I particularly liked the spelling bees because I felt so proud that I was able to do things. It got to the point that every time we had a spelling bee the teacher would tell me that next week she would have to let someone else do it, because I spelled so well, and I was getting all the pencils and tablets. It was an honor for me to come home and tell my mother I got another pencil, or I got another tablet. Things were so bad we were not able to buy these things.

Helen Nash

* * * * * *

MY GRANDMOTHER

My maternal grandmother started a church in Philadelphia. She was a very compassionate person. She would take care of anyone who was sick in the neighborhood. She loved to nurse people back to health. She would also take in kids who had nowhere else to go.

My grandmother sure loved the Bible. She loved to teach the Bible to whoever stopped by her place, but she didn't push her beliefs on anyone. Many people heard about her and they would come over just to hear her teach.

There were so many people coming to the little box house Gram lived in that they eventually had to rent an old store. The store was empty and they took boxes and made benches out of them. As the years went by that old storefront became a church. Today it is called the Baptist Church of West Philadelphia. The people put a plaque up when my grandmother died.

Dorothy Rebhorn

* * * * * *

MY LIFE IS GOOD TODAY

My Father was dead and I didn't mind helping my Mother. I took care of her for the last 15 years of her life. She lived with me. She had cancer. She wrote me a note and she apologized for all the big meanness that she did to me. When she was young she would tie me in the cellar and put me in this closet. But it never bothered me. My brothers used to say, "Dorothy, don't you ever get mad?", and I used to say, "Why, she can't help it, look at all that she has on her mind."

Today I have three daughters. Each one of them takes very good care of me. They drop everything if I say I need help. They are all right there. So it all comes back. What you give out comes back.

Dorothy Rebhorn

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GROWING UP IN POTTSVILLE

I am one of thirteen children, being the third oldest. I was born and raised in Pottsville on the East side of Market Street, attended the Jackson Street School House, 12th Street; 12th Street High School in Pottsville.

When I was a young man, I started my working career at the age of seven. I carried two newspapers, the Pottsville Republican and the Pottsville Journal. In three years I handed these two paper routes down to my brother. Then I became a shoe shine boy in the streets. There I learned the hard knocks you have to learn. I took a few beatings at first,until I met an old-time fighter from Shenandoah. And he said, "Hey kid, come here. I hate to see you getting beat up, but I saw you get beat up the other day." He said, "I am going to do you a favor." I looked at this man. To me he was an old man, but he wasn't that old. Anyway, he showed me a few things that I wanted to know to protect myself and it started to pay off after awhile. And finally I got up to the YMCA, and I became sort of a little fighter. It didn't materialize or go anywhere because I lost the reach. I was putting weight on, but I wasn't picking up heighth. After a few battles I decided that this wasn't for me, but I kept fighting anyway, because I had to until I was fourteen years old.

Then I worked for Dowels Produce, Louie Long's Market on Minersville Street. Most of the people at that time knew me and knew me pretty good. But most of all we used to play cards in the back of the gas station on Sunday morning. Started the game at 5 o'clock. One morning Monsignor O'Boyle walked in and he said: "fellows, break this game up, I want to see you all up in St. Patrick's Church." One fellow spoke up and said, "Father, I am a Protestant." He said, "I didn't ask you what you were, I don't care if you are Jewish, Protestant, Catholic, Atheist,or whatever you might be, I want to see all of you fellows up there sitting up in the first row." So he got these guys attending six o'clock Mass, which was lined up for all the miners going to work. Everybody who worked in the coal mines or lived in that area hit the church to receive their blessing before they went to work. After work,they received another blessing and then went to the local bar room to get what they called a boiler maker, which was a shot and a beer.

Bill Umbenhen

MY GREAT UNCLE LEO

My Uncle Leo was a man of the past. They just don't create men like him anymore. He was a man who practiced chivalry. Leo Joseph Anspach was born January 8, 1898, in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania to Catherine (Schistel) and William Anspach. Leo was raised by his Mother and cared for by his sister Elizabeth. Leo was the kind of son every Mother would be glad to have. He was obedient to his mother, clergy, officials, and bosses all his life. He only attended school until he was 9 or 10, at which time he went to the breaker to be a slate picker or breaker boy. Since his uncle was a boss there, he hoped he would be a little bit favored, but it turned out his uncle was harder on him than the others. But little Leo persevered. He almost lost his life at the age of 16 from typhoid fever. He had a very long recovery. When he returned to work, he went back as a laborer, mucking mud and sometimes as a spragman for the lokie cars. Every pay day he always brought his money home. He turned it over to his Mother, as long as he worked and as long as she lived.

He was the type of man who tipped his hat when passing a Church or greeting a lady. He never appeared for a meal without a shirt and tie, but he always had trouble knotting the tie, so most of his ties were the already knotted ones. He was on the stingy side so he didn't smoke unless someone offered him a cigarette. He didn't indulge in liquor or beer either only at political parties when it was free. He was very much against swearing. For spending money, he sometimes took care of a pool room for a friend.

Kathleen Merchlinsky

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MAYDAY

Every May 1st, we had to get up in the morning without talking, go outside and wash our faces in the dew so we wouldn't get freckles. We were also allowed to take off our long underwear at that time. That was a relief! We never got freckles either! Thank Goodness for Mayday!

Catherine Kemple

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A CHILDHOOD HERO

I have some wonderful memories of my early youth. My family lived in a little mining village called "On The Hill." My Father was a Foreman and he worked for a wonderful man. I'd rather not give his name, but I assure you he would be called a philanthropist today.

We lived with four or five other families, and we had houses that surrounded his estate. He kept horses in stables and his guests would go horseback riding. He also had a huge tennis court and a croquet court. His oriental garden was so huge that he employed men to tend them along with his hothouse. Out his back overlooking the mines he had his own bedroom built. It was an outdoor bedroom just screened in here you would see the gardens. He had schools where he imported the teachers. He also had a school nurse. The nurse would go around, especially when you started to get injections for colds in the lungs. She would come around and she had a little horse and buggy and she would come into the home if anybody were sick. She would take care of them and give them medication. She also started to give the early baby shots which at that time were new.

He had a school for the children from Kindergarten to Eighth grades. There were Girl Scouts, and he had Boy Scouts. He imported college men who were well known in the area. He also had a Community Hall where they had many parties, they had Halloween Parties, big Pork and Sauerkraut suppers around Election time. The Girl Scouts would take care of it. At Christmas time each child in the school was allowed to write a note and you would put three wishes. They would write what they would like to have. The philanthropist's Secretary would go with these notes and decide what would be the best for each child. And at Christmas time we would have a big party with turkey and all the trimmings, and Santa Claus would give each child a gift. Some parents were lucky because they would get a bonus. And with that bonus sometimes they could send their child away to a school.

I guess today you would call him a coal baron because he had many collieries and mines that he owned. He was a man for all people. Anyone who was needy could come to his door and no matter what they asked you could be sure that they would receive all that they needed. No matter what religion, they were all taken care of exactly the same way.

For a young girl I was very fortunate that I could see how the other half lived when I was quite young. I would often visit the kitchen with the housekeeper and the cook and the butler and sit in there while they were preparing for food parties. I was only 9 years old and I would sit and I would make butter patties in the shape of a walnut. I would help to get the table set with the gorgeous China and beautiful flower decorations from the hothouse.

This wonderful man loved nature so much that there was this great big oak tree that he refused to cut down so he had a whole room built around this tree he decided to store his potatoes and things in the tree rather than to cut it down. His home was an English Colonial home. One story just spread around and around. He had this massive fireplace, and he had a porch that went the whole length of the building and that overlooked the whole mountain and the colleries that surrounded the place.

I guess I was most impressed by my mentor when my little sister died. She was only 9 months old when she came down with pneumonia. There were no antibiotics at that time. I'll never forget how my Father's boss came and sat with us children while my Mom and Dad drove to town to make arrangements with the undertaker. What a humble but great man. A man who made an everlasting impression on my life.

Catherine Miller

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IRONING, WASHING, KETCHUP, CANDY, AND LEMONADE

Tradition had established, before I was born, Monday as wash day. Washing and drying clothes was not as easy as it is today. In fact, it was very tiresome for the women, such as my mother. Try to picture life without an electric washer and dryer. I don't believe you can, so I will help. Since most of the men worked at the coal collieries, their clothes were black, as well as themselves. In the beginning, we did not have hot water heaters, which meant the water had to be heated in large metal containers on the kitchen stove making it very hot in the warmer weather. Before the advent of the electric washer, the clothes were put into a circular metal tub with the soap and water. The clothes were cleaned by using a washboard. The washboard was about two feet wide, three feet long, made of wood with a metal rigid surface covering a little better than half the board. There was a space at the top for the soap. The clothes were rubbed against the rigid surface, and then rinsed out in clear water, and hung on outdoor lines in both winter and summer. Sunny Mondays were a must. This was not easy I know because I helped my mother sometimes. Before the clothes were hung on the outdoor line, they had to be put thru a wringer which was hand turned to squeeze out some of the excess moisture.

Washing became easier, to some degree, when the people could afford an electric washer. The cylindrical metal washer was about two to three feet deep with a metal gyrator to agitate the clothes in order to cleanse them. It was run by an electric motor. On the upper part of the washer was an electric wringer. The water had to be carried from the stove, in metal containers, and dumped into the washer. When the wash was finished, my mother turned the washer off, and proceeded to pick up each piece of clothes, fold it so that it would fit into the wringer. The wringer consisted of two rubberized rollers. The operator would start the clothes into the wringer very carefully. Some people, including children, sustained mangled finers that were caught in it before it could be turned off. The clothes were then hung on the outdoor line.

Since there were no dryers, all the clothes had to be hand pressed with irons. The iron was triangular shaped with the pointed end the front and the wider end the back. Again the kitchen stove had to be heated in order to heat the irons. The iron consisted of one clamp-on handle and about three of four irons. The ones that weren't being used were kept on the stove to be heated. This was a long and hard job for the women because of the heat during the summer. Many of the women would start to iron after getting supper, doing the dishes, and putting the children to bed. Sometimes they would iron until it was time to go to bed. They got little help from the husbands because they had worked hard all day themselves. Also those were the days when the men thought it was "sissified" to be seen doing what was considered "women's" work.

Ironing, Washing, Ketchup, Candy and Lemonade (continued)

We also made homemade ketchup. My mother would buy a few bushels of tomatoes, cut them up, and put them into a large metal container. Of course the stove had to be very hot in order to cook the tomatoes. Sugar, spices, vinegar, onions, plus other ingredients were added and the mixture had to be continually stirred so that the mixture would not stick to the bottom of the container. When it had thickened, it was strained (I think) and then bottled. Most homes had a "capper" to cap the bottles. The smell permeated throughout the house for days after. I didn't like the homemade as well as the store bought variety.

Another big event was making hard molasses candy. We called it "moishey". No one really knew its correct spelling. It was a spoken word rather than a written one. I never did see it written. A cast iron black frying pan was the cooking utensil. The ingredients were molasses, little butter and vinegar. It had to be continually stirred, tested by dropping a small amount into water. If it hardened, it was ready to be poured into a metal pan, allowed to harden, cracked, and eaten. It was very good.

Another item which could not be purchased in the stores was lemonade. This, too, had to be made at home. My sister and our friends had crackers and peanut butter with it.

Ingredients were seldom measured. It was amazing how good the finished product was when so much guessing was done. Deciding when something was done was by tasting.

Daniel Kemple

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OLD WIVES TALES - SUPERSTITIONS

The older women in my family were very superstitious. Everything meant something, sometimes good, sometimes bad. Such as:

(1). If your nose itched you were either going to be in a fight or kissed a fool.

(2). If your right ear was itchy you were going to get good news and your left, bad news.

(3). If your foot itched you were going to walk in a strange place. I think the right foot was for the good and the left was for the bad. But if your left hand itched you were going to get money. If you scratched it with your thumb, you were sure to get it.

(4). If your right hand itched, you were going to shake hands.

(5). It would strike me very funny when my Grandmother would hollar from the kitchen, "hurry up, lock the front door a slop is coming." I dropped the dish cloth or a knife or a fork. As I said, everything meant something.

(6). If you got the front of your clothes wet while doing dishes, you were surely going to marry a drunk.

(7). When you married, if you changed your name and not the letter you married for worse and not for better.

(8). The colors you wore at your wedding mattered - married in white, sure to fight; married in black, wish you were back; married in red wish you were dead; married in blue, sure to be true; married in green, ashamed to be seen and so on.

(9). If you started a job on Friday they always said, "Friday flitting, short sitting." In other words it would not last.

(10). Another thing of significance is the little white spots you get under your finger nails. When they reach the top of the nail, which by the way takes months, has meaning. Starting with the thumb it goes, "a friend, a foe, a present, a beau, a journey to go."

(11.) Funny about money -- Money on Monday, money all week, but you have to spit on it. If your hem turns up and you spit on it you will get money. If there are bubbles in your tea or coffee and you drink them, you will get money.

Kathleen Merchlinsky

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TYPICAL HOUSEKEEPING SCHEDULE

Monday - Wash day
Tuesday - Iron clothes
Wednesday - Finish Monday and Tuesday's schedule
Thursday - Clean upstairs
Friday - Clean downstairs
Saturday - Bake and supervise weekly baths
Sunday - usually had guests for dinner of chicken, beef, or pork
Spring - Houseclean
Fall - Houseclean

The women worked hard because they did not have the modern work helpers that we have today, such as electric stoves, freezers, washers, etc. They also had to wash their husbands work clothes, by hand, on washboards. This was not an easy job because I did it for my Mother many times.

Daniel Kemple

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I can think of some commercials from when I was maybe about thirteen years old; they were on the radio. Esso gave the news report every evening. They would say "this is your Esso, Esso, Esso reporter". I remember GIBBONS, "pure refreshing Gibbons. If its Gibbons its good, so the next time you should say Gimme, Gimme, Gimme Gibbons."

Kathy Merchlinsky

This reminds me of a joke that a local clown, a local humorist during the Depression used to say. "I am back on my feet again," meaning that there was nothing between him and the pavement. He said that there was nothing between me and Mother Earth except a Maxwell House coffee box.

Bill Lynagh

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THE JOYS OF AGING

I have become quite a frivolous old gal. I'm seeing five gentlemen every day. As soon as I awake, **Will Power** helps me out of bed. When he leaves I go and see **John** then **Charley Horse** comes along and when he is here, he takes a lot of attention. When he leaves, **Arthur Ritis** shows up and stays the rest of the day. He doesn't like to stay in one place very long so he really takes me from joint to joint. After such a busy day, I'm really tired, so I retire with **Ben Gay**.

Unknown

QUOTE: Maturity is acting your age, not your urge.

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MOVIES

When we reached our junior and senior years in high school, the movies became our principal source of entertainment because there was no television. Getting the price of admission and a ride to either Pottsville or Port Carbon was always a big task. The Capital and The Hippodrome were the two theaters located in Pottsville. The Hap had vaudeville on a weekly basis. This was a bargain because we got to see the movies and also the vaudeville acts. Port Carbon also had movies in the Legion building. It also featured double features. The Sacred Heart Parish in New Philadelphia sponsored movies on Wednesdays and Sundays. There was no problem attending because we could also walk to and from New Philadelphia. Having a date meant attending the Capital Theater in Pottsville. On Saturday evenings there were long lines stretching out of the theater and South on Center Street. The movies also played a big part in the courtship of my mother and father. Their favorite theater was Flood's in New Philadelphia where it cost one nickel for admission.

As you can see, going on a date then was either attending a movie, dancing at Lakewood, Lakeside, or The Ritz, plus other choices.

Daniel Kemple

FOLK MEDICINE

We had no over-the-counter cough medicine. My grandmother made ours out of snakes, rum and rock candy. We had many treatments that seem strange today such as: sulfur and molasses for a tonic; sulfur and lard rubbed on our chest for colds; heated onion heart for earaches; mustard plaster on chests for colds. We also took Vicks with sugar in it which we had to swallow. Once a month, we were taken to the drug store for a Root Beer with Castor Oil. When we had mumps we would put lard wrapped around our necks. It was awful. There were other medicines, like roasted lemon with flaxseed. I guess it seems strange today, but we thanked God for simple cures.

Dot Rebhorn

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AN OLD CURE

When we were ill and couldn't breath as well as we should, the doctors only thought about some whiskey. You couldn't buy whiskey anywhere because of Prohibition. The only place that you could get whiskey was at a drug store and you needed to have a doctor's prescription. Then you could only take a teaspoon at a time. It was given to us like a medicine, or we would take it in a cup of tea. It sure worked. It's amazing how we lived way back then.

Louise Klitzner

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SEARS CATALOG HOUSES

Now-a-days when we often ride the highways you can see large ready built houses being delivered, modular homes so to speak. Before the modular homes were the pre-fab homes, they came in walls and they brought the windows and sections of it. Doorways were already built. Before that, especially in Frackville in the 1920's, some of the homes and one church were bought from the Sears Roebuck catalog. They were sort of the first pre-fab homes, buildings, churches of that era. One of the churches in Frackville is still a Sears Roebuck church. Some of the houses in Frackville were bought from the Sears Roebuck catalog. I had a 1902 catalog at one time and very foolishly I discarded it. It got yellow with age and I discarded it. In there were pictures of some of the houses. Some of them cost $5,000, some of them were from $2,200 up. St. Ann's church is one of the Sears Roebuck churches in Frackville. It was dedicated around Christmas of 1925.

Lorraine Stanton

TOGETHERNESS

There was a house in Shenandoah that housed about 10 families. They were mostly Polish people and they had rather large families like 6 to 10 children. This building was divided into 8 or 10 apartments. They didn't have indoor toilets. The toilets were all out in the yard all in a line and everyone had a number and they knew their own toilet. Upstairs in the back there was one toilet with plumbing all the way in the back of the building that two to three families on the top floor used. It only had a half partition that when you sat on the toilet you could be making conversation with people going back and forth in the hall. There was only one sink there too, the kitchen sink was used by two or three families with a lot of children and they took turns doing the dishes. I was in the apartment after the people left and they were only about 6 feet high so the children couldn't grow very big even if they wanted too. They were all short people.

I had an aunt that lived on the ground floor. Four families lived on the basement floor, four on the ground floor, and four on the top floor with people in the back.

Kathleen Merchlinsky

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HOME SHOPPING THEN

When I was a little girl we lived in what was called an alley. We lived on Lehigh Street and that was right above the Lehigh Valley Railroad. Our street during the day was filled with vendors, mostly horse and wagon. We had ice men, beer men, farmers, milkmen. We called them "sheenies." They are rag men or junk men now, and the garbage men always had open trucks and everything was dumped right on top of the trucks. It was fascinating to see what people would throw out.

Then we had hucksters. A huckster is a man who would come around with fruit, say watermelon, cantaloupe, oranges, strawberries. One man would come with a whole truck load of strawberries. We had a store-at-your-door, and bakers and the Jewel tea man and once in awhile an ice cream man. My husband said that he only came in July. A Jewel Tea man would give you premiums for buying his products. He would give you a set of dishes and you worked it off with premiums. Everytime you bought something you had 10 credits towards your dishes until your dishes were paid off in that way. They sold all household things.

A store-at-your-door would come around in a truck and he would have everything you would have in a grocery store, but at a much higher prices because it was coming right to your door. The farmers would always bring fresh beef and fresh pork and sausages and baloney. Almost everything would come right to your door.

Kathy Merchlinsky

ICE FOR SALE

The ice was cut in the dams and men would go out with four strong sleds and they would cut the ice. They cut the blocks in 5 foot by 3 foot by 2 foot. They would haul that on the wagons to an ice house were it would be kept for a year until the next time it got cold. It was stored in the ice house and packed with straw and all summer the local ice men would bring these big blocks on trucks or originally wagons. You might have a worthwhile piece of ice, about 2 foot by 2 foot by 1 foot, depending on the size of your refrigerator. He would throw a burlap bag over his shoulder and put this hunk of ice up on his shoulder and bring it in to your cellar or your kitchen where you would have your ice box. Sometimes he carried it with big tongs. The children used to follow the ice wagons all summer long for the chips of ice that would fall off. There was a big dish pan under your ice box. The ice would last about a week if it wasn't too warm.

Kathy Merchlinsky

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THE ICE HOUSE

My Grandfather Green had a large ice house on his farm in which blocks of ice, covered with layers of sawdust, were stored for the summer. We spent many a hot, summer day running up and down these blocks of ice, having a lot of fun and keeping cool at the same time.

These blocks of ice were "harvested" at Green's or Beury's dam. Men would cut the 10" or 12" thick ice into squares then load them on to a wagon, pulled by horses, and taken to the farm. These were then put into the ice house.

Catherine Kemple

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Remember When . . . . . .

YO - YO'S WERE ALL THE RAGE?

The first became popular in the 1930's. But, they go back much further in history. A Greek bowl dating back to 450 B.C. depicts a child playing with a Yo - Yo.

The most popular Yo - Yo in America was the Duncan Yo - Yo. Early on it was made from hard maple. Today, they are mostly made from plastic. They used to cost a nickel. Now, they cost a few dollars.

Unknown

THE UMBRELLA MAN

When we were young, I remember as soon as we heard the sound of the bell we would holler, here comes the umbrella man! Everybody would go out and see the umbrella man. He would go up and down the street ringing his bell and any one who had umbrellas to be fixed would have them fixed by him and he would also sell you an umbrella if you needed one. The man that I recall was not a pleasant man at all. He would chase the children. This was his way of making a living going up and down the street selling and fixing umbrellas.

Kathy Merchlinsky

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STRANGE BUT TRUE

During World War I there were people who used to collect what were called Doggie Diamonds. They were dog turds. They would be dry on the street and people used to save them. It was used in the manufacture of explosives. It was kind of a basic ingredient for explosives. They called them Doggie Diamonds, because you could accumulate money selling them.

Kathy Merchlinsky

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PRE-FAB HOUSES

Around the turn of the century, the DL & W; Delaware, Lackawanna and Western coal company also owned a railroad, the DL & W Railroad. They contracted a company from New York State to make cement homes. This is a modern conception. They are making pre-fabricated cement homes now. I was amazed at the ingenuity that all this was done by railroad cars. The railroad cars would bring in the sand and the stone and the cement and there was a big mixing bin on one car and the other cars contained the ingredients and they were all funneled into this mixer. They were building a village. This one village was somewhere in the Hazleton, Susquehanna County area. Some of these buildings are still standing even though they were abandoned. The cement structures are still there.

The coal companies built these homes because they were employing people who would otherwise have to walk two miles to work from the nearest village. So they built these homes right around the breaker. They couldn't build homes for everybody, they only built homes for the officials. The laborers had to made-do walking two miles to work. The Superintendents, Line Foremen, Firebosses any administrative jobs - these homes were built for them. They were called Mine Patches. They also had a Company Store. They would have to buy everything from the Company Store and it would be taken out of their pay.

Bill Lynagh

FIRETRUCKS

I remember the firetrucks of about 1938. The trucks were pulled by horses. We lived across the street from the firehouse and the firemen used to give the children rides on them. One time I got my hand jammed in a jar and my mother was afraid to take it off. So she took me over to the firehouse and they took it off for her. The firemen gave me a ride on the big white horse. I was scared because it was so big and there wasn't any saddle on the horse. What an experience!

Dorothy Rebhorn

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STREET CARNIVALS

Our street carnivals were three blocks long. Both sides of the street had lanterns and balloons on their porches and houses. There was very little gambling and children were not allowed to gamble. It was mostly the men who did this. Beer was in the back yard on both sides of the streets and you had to go down the alley. You could drink a glass or take a container, like a pitcher to take it home. This only cost 50 cents. For the children they had a puppet show called Punch and Judy and pony rides plus other rides and games. Dancing, food and stuffed animals were abundant. Everyone pitched in to make it a success. I danced a lot with everyone who could stand me. This was in the 1920's.

Dorothy Rebhorn

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RESTROOMS

We had no bathroom inside. We had outhouses, and had to walk in the snow and all kinds of weather to go to the bathroom. It was made of wood and only had two seats. No lights, no flushing, no toilet paper. We had to use newspaper, old pattern sheets and catalog pages.

Bill Lynagh

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MOVIES

I can remember in the old days what it was like to go to the movies. I paid 25 cents to see a movie. But we didn't see only one movie. There was first a stage show. We saw Red Skeleton, the Three Stooges, or Henny Youngman. We also saw a weekly serial, and a short story and two cartoons, then came the Main feature. There was a matinee during the day and a nighttime show. They played a game like bingo and gave out prizes. I won a cocktail set. Pots and pans and sterling silver knives and forks. Also they had a "dish" night. Every week you got a piece of china until the whole set was obtained. The nighttime price was 35 cents for adults, 15 cents for children. It was nice.

Dorothy Rebhorn

In the 1930's at all Shirley Temple movies, everyone who entered the theater received a glass, a bowl or a pitcher with Shirley's picture on it. Sometimes we got an autographed picture of the star. Movies only cost a dime in the 30's. On Saturday you always had a double feature. We always took cookies and fruit along. You could spend the best part of a day in the theater. There were always long lines waiting for the next show, in the lobby and all the way up the street. Most of the movies that children saw were Shirley Temple, The Bowery Boys, Dead End Kids, Our Gang, Andy Hardy and numerous Cowboy Movies with Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, Tom Mix and Hopalong Cassidy.

Kathy Merchlinsky

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TRAVELING CARNIVALS

In the late 30's we were often entertained by carnivals for a week at a time. They would come by truck and train, a group of sort of vagabonds with rides for kids, side shows and stands with soda, popcorn, cotton candy, candy apples - things that were not readily available. In the side shows, which usually charged a fee of about 10 cents you saw: "The Lobster Woman", "The Half Man and Half Woman", "The Largest Alligator in the World." This was very exciting to us. We were always warned to be careful so that the Gypsies did not steal us.

Kathy Merchlinsky

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TRANSPORTATION

We rode a trolley car instead of a bus. You entered them from were the motor man was and in the middle of the car was a conductor, who had a pole in front of him. It was 30 inches, and anyone 30 inches or under did not have to pay. You exited out the side.

Dorothy Rebhorn

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STREET LIGHTS

Our street lights were gas and a man with a big pole, with an ignition device attached used to go around and light them in the evening and put them out in the morning. We also had the same kind of lighting in our house. I had the job of lighting our livingroom Chandelier. It was in the early '20's. These lights were called arc-lights. Two carbon electrodes were activated to send an arc-light between them.

Dorothy Rebhorn

THE COAL STOVE

We used to have a coal stove in the kitchen. It had three burners that were used for cooking. You had to use a handle to take off the lids. We used coal or wood to cook. On one side was the oven, and the rest of it was used as a heater. No other room had one in it. We used to put big pans of water on top of the stove and used the hot water to take a bath. It was the only room in the house that was warm. My job was to keep it clean. We had some kind of rag and paste that made it shine. We used to put our feet in the oven to keep them warm (when my Mother wasn't looking). Then after bath we were bundled up and put to bed with a hot iron wrapped in a towel to keep us warm. The iron had a removable handle. My bed was a feather mattress. I sunk way down in it.

Dorothy Rebhorn

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The MEDICINE SHOW

In Cumbola there was an empty lot which we kids used to refer to as The Green. It was our baseball and football fields until we got older and graduated to the town baseball field across the Schuylkill River. Today it is a built up section of the town. The Medicine Show came to town for a two week period for many summers. It consisted of tents, some for the show, and some for the show people's living quarters. About dusk each evening there would be some kind of entertainment in the form of juggling, singing and dancing, jokes, and others. The best part of the show was the selling of their cure all medicine. The men would tell all the ailments it would cure and then have his employees pass amongst the people selling the bottles of medicine. I was always surprised at how eager the people were to buy the medicine. Of course, the medicine was not the cure all it was supposed to be, but the show was someplace to spend part of the evening and it was fun. I forgot to mention that the owner always had some of his workers, or paid someone, to buy the first few bottles of his medicine. Sometimes a carnival would come to town which was better than the medicine shows because we could sneak in under the tents.

Daniel Kemple

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POW-POW

A Pow-Pow Woman is a woman who used herbs for healing purposes and they prayed over you. They knew certain prayers for certain illnesses that you were supposed to get well with. My Aunt was the type that could never gain weight. She was very weak. This was about 80 years ago. There weren't many doctors then, so her Mother as a last resort took her to a Pow-Pow Woman. She would give her certain types of herbs and she had to drink these herbs all the time. She gained her strength and health back within a year.

Louise Klitzner

A POW-POW PRACTICE

These people had special powers and I went with an Aunt one time. She was having headaches all the time and they didn't even bother going to doctors most of the time. I remember the woman standing over my Aunt and she put her hand over my Aunt's head and said: "out of the head into the world" and put her hands down to her face and said, "out of the face and into the world" and would slowly go all the way down to her legs and say, "out of the legs into the world". This was supposed to be part of the powers that would take the pain away.

Kathleen Merchlinsky

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INDOOR PLUMBING AT LAST

Another great time in my life was the day we got indoor plumbing to take care of our bodily waste. We had to use what was called a "slop bucket". This meant someone, usually my Mother, had to empty the buckets in the outhouse. These were located in the backyards away from the house. Pleasant, they were not.

Daniel Kemple

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MILK

The grocery store was a few blocks away from our house. We usually had milk delivered, but sometimes I had to go to Curry's store when we ran out of it. Milk, at that time, was in pint and quart glass bottles and was not homogenized. The cream rose to the top of the bottle and the skim milk to the lower part. The cap was a thin round paper with the logo of the company on it. By the time I got home, we just had skim milk because I learned the top could be loosened enough to drink the cream. In the winter time, if the milk was exposed to below freezing temperatures long enough, the cream froze above the bottle opening and could be broken or chewed.

Daniel Kemple

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CARPET CLEANING

For many years we never had a vacuum cleaner either manual or electrified. My mother, as well as the other housewives of that period, housecleaned every Spring and Fall. It provided many topics for conversation amongst the women. I did help her because I just couldn't see her do all the work and me hardly any. Some jobs I liked and some I didn't. The most distasteful one was beating the living an dining room rugs. The rugs were taken up and hung over the clotheslines in the back yard. The only tool required was a carpet beater. It was a flat wire head, of many different designs, with a handle of wood about one to two feet long. The batter used the beater as he or she would use a tennis racket or a plain old paddle. Since there were two sides to the carpet, it meant sore muscles and an aching back. I think I could still be beating the carpet since then and there would be dust coming out of it. If your Mother asks you to run the vacuum cleaner, see how fortunate you are not to have to use a carpet beater.

Daniel Kemple

SCHOOL DANCES IN THE 1930"S

I was very shy. I was a wall flower. Even at 14, 15, and 16 I didn't have any dates really. I liked boys, but they were shy, too. At that time they had to ask you for a dance and even if they wanted to ask you they were too shy to ask you. So you sat on the sidelines and watched everybody dance. Today a girl doesn't sit on the sidelines and watch. She goes over and asks someone to dance. This is how people meet today. In my day, they didn't do that - that was a no no.

Louise Klitzner

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NO GIRLS ALLOWED

In 1944, '45, '46 I went to school dances. At that time girls did not dance with girls. You only danced if a boy asked you. We did the jitterbug and a lot of waltzing.

Kathleen Merchlinsky

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DATING

In 1935, 1936, when you dated you really didn't date like you do today. Girls and boys did not hold hands. You where mostly on the shy side. You didn't talk a lot. It was mostly a walk to a party where you had been invited or just went for a walk. We always went to the nearest ice cream parlor. When we were brought home we never kissed goodbye or goodnight. We would always thank our dates for having a very nice time even if you weren't having a very nice time. You would always tell them that you did have a good time and hoped to see them again.

Louise Klitzner

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BASEBALL IN THE 1930'S

Back in the very early '30's the young boys came from different parts of the streets from the town, possibly 16 from the town. They scheduled games about 2 to 3 times a week, although you had time to play every day. We had a lot of nice teams but no organizations I played. This was with no outside help. Some of the adults would coach, but certainly not like today.

Joe Bisko

A POPULAR JOKE OF OUR DAY

This Scout Master told the scouts at this one meeting that he wanted each one of them to come back to the next meeting and have a story to tell about some good deed they had done. They came back to the next meeting and they all had a story. He called on the first scout and he said that he helped a little old lady across the street, and the Scout Master said that that was a very noble act; he called the second scout and he said, "I helped a little old lady across the street." The Scout Master said "fine." That was a fine thing to do. He called the third scout and said, "I helped a little old lady across the street." It went down like that until all the scouts where done. So the Scout Master decided that these scouts where pulling his chain. He looked at them and said, "look, you guys are pulling my leg, you all had the same story that you helped a little old lady across the street. There are not that many little old ladies around." The one scout said that they all helped the same little old lady, she just didn't want to go."

Bill Lynagh

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DISCIPLINE

When we were sitting down at the dinner table, not one of us children dared to yawn or throw our hands up in the air or act tired. You always said grace before your meals. And if accidentally you threw a piece of bread on the floor, you picked it up, shook it off, blessed yourself and put it back in your mouth and asked the Lord to forgive you for not taking care and throwing that piece of bread on the floor. Also, you were always taught never to touch anything that did not belong to you. You respected your brothers and sisters because they were older. You were taught to respect your elders. I can remember one time we lived across from the cemetery. Someone had been buried that day. My brother and sister had two friends down the street and we all got together and we all decided to go over to the cemetery to look at those flowers. They looked so beautiful, we decided to pick a bouquet. We plucked flowers from the various bouquets that were there and when we came home the first thing mother asked was where did we get those flowers, and unless we told her, we were going to get a spanking. So I, being the smallest one of the bunch, and I loved my mother dearly, decided to tell even though I knew that I was going to get a spanking. My mother literally picked us up by the ears, took us right over to that cemetery and made us kneel down, made us pray to God, and tell him we would never do that again. Those flowers did not belong to us and she made us pray that whoever was buried there would forgive us for doing such a thing over his or her grave.

Helen Nash

A CUSTOM

We were always taught to respect the cemeteries and the dead. When we visited the cemetery you made sure you did not cross a grave. You walked around the borders of the grave you never walked right on the grave because that was terrible disrespect. And of course when you visited a relatives grave you always knelt down and said a prayer for the relative. My grandmother would always say that when you take something from the cemetery you would always have to put something back. Of course that was a superstition, but we were always afraid to take something from the cemetery because we thought we would have to pay for it with our lives.

Kathleen Merchlinsky

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A STRICT UPBRINGING

The openness of the people today, young and old, is startling to me. I was raised by a grandmother and an uncle who were very strict. In our house everyone was very private about themselves. Robes were only worn when going from the bathroom to the bedroom. I never wore shorts until I hit the rebellious teens. I don't recall how I acquired them, but I could only wear them in the house and never in the presence of my uncle.

If any men, insurance agents or Priest came to call on my family, neither my mother nor myself were allowed to share the sofa with them. I was forever warned not to entice men.

No one ever swore in our home. We never heard words like sex or pregnant until I was in high school, and then it was only in girl talk. I don't know if others had such an austere up-bringing as I did, or maybe it was because of living with a grandmother who passed on her strict values.

Kathy Merchlinsky

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ON MANNERS

Table manners were very important. When the person came into the room you waited until they sat down for you to sit down. Whenever you would meet a person you would always shake hands. You would say "hello" and "how are you" and listen for that persons name. You weren't supposed to forget their names. Today it goes out the window.

ON MANNERS (continued)

Opening car doors for other people was also very important. You would stand in front of the car door until the person you were with would come and open it for you. Even walking the streets, a man does not walk on the inside of the street. He was always supposed to walk on the outside of the street. The lady was always on the inside of the street. If you had older people coming to see you with children, the older people would come in first and then the children. When you sat down for dinner the older people would be seated first, then the children.

Dorothy Rebhorn

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MAYOR LORD

On a Saturday morning the Mayor would come down and get all the kids, maybe 150 to 200 kids. He would take them up to the Capital Theatre. You would enjoy all the comics. It was free. It didn't cost you a dime. Then he would march you all the way up to Yuengling's Ice Cream Parlor, where Mr. Yuengling would supply all the ice cream, free of charge. Everybody would get a dixie cup. This used to take place every Saturday during the summer. That is how Mayor Lord became very popular because he believed in people. He knew how to treat everybody, regardless of color or religion.

Bill Umbenhen

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CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

At Christmas time our whole family went into the woods to look for a tree. Daddy would cut down or saw the top off a tree we thought would be perfect. Many times, however, we decided we had found a better one, discarded the first, and cut down another. We never thought of this as wasteful - the forest was full of trees!! Sometimes, if we were lucky, we would brush away the snow and find teaberries underneath. That really was a treat!

We never saw the tree decorated until Christmas morning. My parents did that after we went to bed. There would be a 10 foot tall tree!!

We never received many gifts, but I do remember what a treat it was to find a few tangerines in my stocking Christmas morning.

Catherine Kemple

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CHRISTMAS AT AGE 10 IN THE 1930'S

Being German, my grandmother was very very conservative and living in the depression era also made her super conservative. Our Christmas tree was brought from the woods. My uncle would bring it. It was a very very sparse spruce tree. It seemed like it was no sooner in the house that it would start falling. It was a big wirey tree that you had to cut half the branches off. You would use them to decorate the door. The decorations were blown glass balls for the most part. When we went to school we used to get little boxes of candy. The priest would give it out and we would save those boxes from year to year and hang them on the tree. We didn't do popcorn like other people used to do. We had the glass balls for years. We had a Christmas yard too, we had these little men and women that their heads bobbed when you would press them down. We had a trunk up in the attic full of Christmas decorations, little houses that you had to assemble and a lot of little cardboard houses and little churches. I don't really remember a manger, but I am sure there must have been a manger of some sort.

The presents were very sparse because, evidently the generation before me didn't get any presents. When I would expect presents everyone was surprised. I remember getting two or three pieces of hair ribbon that you would tie around your hair, and several pair of panties. That was about it in the beginning. I didn't live with my mother, so she would bring packages of doll clothes. She would make clothes and dress her dolls for me. I did wind up with a lot of dolls somehow over the years. That was a project she always took on for Christmas. One in particular was a peachy colored kewpie doll and she was very soft. I really loved that doll to the point on top of her head. I remember my mother making a black velvet coat for that with an orange lining. Of course she made it reversible. She was very clever. When you hung your stocking you would get apples, oranges, nuts and some change in your stocking. That's all we ever got.

Kathleen Merchlinsky

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APRIL FOOL'S DAY

One April Fool's Day, Mother baked a lot of cupcakes. Some of these she had filled with cotton to fool the kids and grown-ups who came by. Biting into a wad of cotton was very foolish.

Catherine Kemple

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THANKSGIVING

The only memory that I have of Thanksgiving is when my grandmother would get the turkey. Of course, we got a fresh one from a farmer and she would take it out in the back and cut the head off and sometimes it would run around without its head. The farmer would have a truck full of chickens, ducks, and turkeys and you would go and pick one out. He would hang it by the feet and weigh it and you paid so much for a pound. She would scald it and we would pick the feathers out then we cut it open and took the guts out and cleaned it. They always tasted better than the ones you buy in the store. They were very juicy. The frozen ones that we get now are very dry.

Kathleen Merchlinsky

EASTER IN THE 1930'S

Everybody went into Easter week with their Easter Outfits. Our parents traveled to the closest town usually after Church on Holy Thursday or Good Friday. First you would go to early Church and they would have processions on Holy Thursday and Good Friday. Then you would go out and do your shopping. Later you would have the traditional Good Friday dinner. Holy Saturday would be spent in getting ready for the Holy day. On Easter Sunday morning you would get dressed and ready for Church at 5 o'clock in the morning. We always managed to have candy in our pockets and on the way home from Church we would have a few jelly beans and chocolates coming home. It is something nice to look back on.

Catherine Miller

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PASSOVER

Jewish people celebrated Passover - Pasiac as we call it. This holiday started Thursday with a thorough house cleaning. My mother would change all of our dishes - silverware and pots and pans. The dishes we used every day were not used at this time, as this holiday was known as a new Era for the Jews. We were celebrating our Freedom from the Eqyptians - as we were their slaves for 400 years. Moses was the deliverer of the Jewish people. Everything was so different in the house. We weren't allowed any bread at all for 8 days.

We had unleavened bread or Matzo the first night. We had the first Seder. Everything served had a meaning. Horseradish, for the bitterness of 400 years of slavery; hard egg with salt water, the rebirth of our people; unleavened bread (Matzo), fish - Lamb and we were allowed only the root vegetables such as red beets, carrots, radishes, onions, sweet potatoes, etc. Everything that was in the house before (for eating purposes) was cleansed for the high holiday. It was celebrated for 8 days.

The first two nights was a large Seder. Wine was drunk in small quantities by all. The children were given grape juice and everyone prayed. Questions and answers were asked and answered by the children and elders. It took hours for these two Seders as they were very special.

Passover was happily looked forward to by all of our people. It was a well celebrated holiday as we had special cookies and a lot of sponge cakes made from a lot of eggs and potato starch. They were light, fluffy and delicious and looked forward to by all.

Louise Klitzner

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND GAMES PLAYED

Elementary school was very pleasant because we had such kind, considerate, and understanding teachers, all of whom lived in Cumbola. I can only remember a few things bout elementary school. Stick ball was very popular among the older boys. The items necessary were a thick pliable stick, the ball, a broom stick, the bat, and two piles of stones opposite one another on which to place the stick. Also, there were three bases because stick ball followed the rules of baseball. The batter would place the stick on the stones, take one swing and try to reach as many bases as he could.

Another fond and amusing memory of elementary school was sitting for an afternoon in the sixth grade with gum on my nose. Mr. Whalen, our stern teacher, had no gum chewing rule and we all knew the penalty. Of course, I broke the rule and supplied the laughter for the entire class.

Another game was nips. The nip was a square piece of wood from five to six inches long with pointed ends on ends, and the numbers one, two, three, and x carved into it. A circle five feet in diameter was drawn into the ground. My opponent would stand in the ring and throw the nip into the air. If an x came up, it meant no swings. I was entitled to from one to three swings if any of these three numbers showed. A square wooden paddle with a carved out handle was the bat. The idea was to hit the nip on either end, send it into the air, and then hit it as far as possible with the paddle. The idea was to use each swing to hit the nip as far as possible with each swing from the drawn circle. I then would try to estimate how many running jumps it would take my opponent to reach the circle. If he did it within my estimation, he got that number as points towards whatever total score was agreed upon.

Daniel Kemple

CHILDREN'S GAMES OF THE DAY

One of my favorite games was called "Girls, Boys". We drew 10 or 12 blocks in two rows.

Cigarettes	Trees
Cars	Fruit
Colors	Vegetables
Boys	Towns
Girls	States

We used a small ball. We would roll the ball and then run to catch it. You tried to catch the ball in the block that you wanted it to land. You tried to get all the blocks.

Kathleen Merchlinsky

HOP SCOTCH

Everyone knows about this game.

Kathleen Merchlinsky

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FREEZING BUTTER

Everyone would take odd positions and some one would yell "**Freeze**" and you would stay in that position until you were released by command. We could never stay still very long.

Kathleen Merchlinsky

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WATERMELON

About 10 kids would hold hands in a row. We would start running down the street counting to 10. At the count of 10 one person would drop off and stay there so and so on, until everyone was dropped off. Then the last person would start back to pick everyone up again. Everyone would continue back up the street counting and yelling watermelon. At the end we would fall down spent and laughing.

Kathleen Merchlinsky

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WHAT WE DID BEFORE T.V.

Girls:

Roller Skate
Jump rope
Ball and Jacks
Played Games
Read Books
Colored Cutouts
Puzzles
Sewing

WHAT WE DID BEFORE T.V. (continued)

Boys:

Tug of War
Cops and Robbers
Hide and Seek
Marbles
Jack Knife
Pitching Cards
Pitching Pennies
Bowling Hoops
Ball Games

Kathleen Merchlinsky

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LEISURE ACTIVITIES

Windy Curry had a grocery store on the second floor of his home in downtown Cumbola. The first floor was primarily a stockroom, but of more importance to the men and older teenagers he ran a poolroom. I learned to shoot pool here. On a number of occasions, my father would play me. We played straight pool with the winner being the first one to score 25 or 50 points. I usually invited him down whenever I thought I could beat him, but as far as I can remember, I never did.

Tommy Carlin, our local barber, also had a poolroom. He, and his brother, were competitors of my father. They, like my father, were pretty good. My friend, William Whalen, and I got to the point that we could play some of the men and win. There were two men, with bad tempers, who fancied themselves good players. One night they challenged William and me to a gam of 50 points, losers pay. William and I agreed that we would play a very conservative game by making any loose balls, and then playing safe, leaving our opponents without a good clear shot. They would lose their tempers and proceed to break the balls loose and we would sometimes clear the table. We won and they challenged us to another gam, but William and I decided it was best for us to leave while we were still in one piece.

The Curry's also conducted pigeon shoots usually on a Sunday afternoon. These shoots were held on the baseball field or some other level area. Two men would challenge one another to a shoot of an agreed number of pigeons for hundreds of dollars. Each shooter would put up a certain amount of his own money, with the backers investing the remainder. Let's just say $500.00. The shooter and some of his backers raised pigeons just for this purpose. Sometimes they would buy pigeons from outsiders if they knew he had a reputation for raising good birds. The shooters and crowd had to stand behind a semi-circle twenty-one yards away from the trap which contained the pigeon to be shot at. Each shooter had a man, or men, who would put the pigeon into the trap for the other shooter to try to bring down. Double-barreled or single-barreled shotguns were used. If the pigeon fell within a radius of 21 yards from the trap it was considered a kill. The shooter would take aim, "say" pull when ready, and the trap man would pull a rope

releasing the spring to open the trap. The best birds were the ones that would immediately fly away, at an angle, just a few inches above the ground. If a pigeon came down within the 21 yard limit, it was the job of the pigeon retriever to get it before it went beyond the 21 yards. The most unpleasant aspect of this sport was the pigeon retriever would wring the neck of the injured pigeon. I guess we were cruel, but no one ever made any complaints. There were also female shooters.

Another Sunday entertainment were rooster fights. Rooster fighting was illegal then as it is today. Roosters, just like pit bulls, can be bred just for fighting one another. These rooster fights were held in Curry's basement. The fighting took place on a level area with bleachers for the spectators. We teenagers thought we were really something because we were allowed into the arena. There were a number of fights with each owner and his friends betting. It was a noisy, smokey place where lots of money changed hands. The roosters were kept in cages because if they weren't they would begin fighting one another too soon. Before each fight, the handlers would take the roosters out of their cages, hold their feet and legs, bringing them close to one another so as to arouse their anger at one another. These fights were usually to the death or if one owner called it quits. We were watchers not players.

Also on Sunday afternoons during the summer we attended the baseball games,either in Cumbola or New Philadelphia. The teams were made up of players ranging from teenagers to grown men. The league was made up of teams from Pottsville, Cumbola, New Philadelphia, Middleport, and a few others. There was an intense rivalry, especially between Cumbola and New Philadelphia. The attendance at most of these games was well into the hundreds. No admission was charged because the field was across the Schuylkill River and to get to there meant walking from Tobin's Dam to the field about one-half mile away. The fans could use some of the homemade bridges, consisting of wooden planks and large stones. Someone always fell into the black muddy water. Collections, using hats or caps for the money collected. Left field and center field were hazardous. On long fly balls, the player had to keep his mind on the approaching ball and the river at his back. Many fielders would allow the ball to fall into the river rather than risk falling into the water. Another exciting aspect of these games were the fights that occurred. Some of the players I can remember were Knocker Weldon, Al Hertz, Baker Stiles, Smiler, John Christ, and Rudy Rambola. Baseball was being played by my father as a young man (1910) until the advent of World War II. Remember these were the only games to be seen because TV was many years in the future. Not many families owned cars. I never participated because I was not good enough.

Daniel Kemple

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LIFE AS A SHOE SHINE BOY

As a shoe shine boy on the street there were three or four colored fellows who were shoe shining on the street. There was a smoke shop along side the Capital Theater and I would shine shoes there. My favorite saying was: "a shine for a dime", "come on man, get a shine for a dime". It would put a smile on your face. If that wouldn't work, in order to get a tip or two you would give a little three step or four step with your shoes, you learned to tap and then you would sing a little song. The average guy would get about twenty-five cents. A dime at that time was a lot of money so you would get a fifteen cent tip. sometimes you would get a $20.00 bill on a Saturday. Some guys didn't make that much in the mines all week. As I began to grow with the people and get to understand people, once again God gave me the gift of sixth sense and that sense was to know people; to learn people; to study people, and smell whenever trouble was going to start right away, in a second you would know it before it even happened. You can tell that this guy was bad news or that guy was bad news and that he was looking for nothing but trouble. The nice part of everything was the people. At that time the ladies wore patent leather shoes and they always wanted a shine.

Bill Umbenhen

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COST OF LIVING THEN

Prices of food where so much cheaper. A loaf of bread was 5 cents a loaf; you could buy a whole loin of pork chops for 60 cents. Chuck roast was 50 cents a pound. Sugar was 5 cents a pound; a box of crackers was 5 cents a box; bananas were 6 pounds for a quarter. potatoes were 75 cents a bushel. Cabbage you could get a basket full for 60 cents. Apples, a peck, was 15 to 20 cents a peck. Lettuce was 5 cents a head; flour was bought by the 50 pound bag or 100 pound bag. I remember buying 50 pound bags for 50 cents. A quart of milk was pasteurized at 8 cents a quart and was usually delivered to the house by the milkman or a farmer. Chickens were bought live. We never bought a chicken from the store. We always had to kill the chicken ourselves and clean it ourselves. Molasses was in a barrel. We got a whole quart for 25 cents a quart. All the dry foods were 5 cents a pound or less sometimes. The grab bags in the store you would purchase for 1 cent and there was a lot of candy in them. Ice cream cones, a double dip went for 5 cents.

Dorothy Rebhorn

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SARAH ANN McCOOL

The first history of Schuylkill County was written by Sarah Ann McCool. She was born in Allentown, October 14, 1833, the daughter of Reverend Joseph and Mrs. (Benedict) McCool. They then moved to Pottsville and lived there their remaining years.

She was a high school teacher at the Jackson Street School in Pottsville with a yearly salary of $470.

Miss McCool wrote a weekly column for the Shenandoah Evening Herald entitled "Schuylkill County Historic Gleanings" by S.M. At that time, in the 1800's, women weren't allowed to have their full names in the paper except for wedding or death announcements.

Miss McCool travelled all over the county by horse and buggy and interviewed many early settlers and founders of our towns at that time. This was considered a dangerous time in our county because the Molly Maguires were active at that time.

All history books about our county refer to her Historic Gleanings as the first source of information.

If anyone wants to read the "Gleanings" they are on file at the Pottsville Free Public Library, Historical Society of Schuylkill County, and the State Library at Harrisburg. Each town is listed in a separate chapter so if you want to read the first history of your town it is very accessible.

In 1976, I located a grand-niece, Mrs. Polly M. Joyce of Pottsville who provided a picture of Miss McCool. I had this reproduced and presented copies to the Pottsville Library, the Historical Society, the State Library and Penn State Schuylkill Campus Archives.

In the latter part of her career, Miss McCool was principal of the Female Grammar School in Pottsville. She was a pioneer in this respect because for many years a public school principal was almost always a man.

Miss McCool died on February 10, 1906 and is buried in Pottsville.

Lorraine Stanton

THE FLU EPIDEMIC

My father was German and he was friends with the Governor. He got the Governor to send in Army doctors from around the county. They came around to the houses to help the other doctors to give medicines and things and to see how they were. There was one doctor, his wife was a nurse and she stayed at our home and took care of us.

There was this apartment that was the Milligan's home that they turned into a place to take the sick. They had different people driving cars and things that could take the sick out of their homes.

Loretta Higgins

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FLU OUTBREAK IN 1918

It started after the soldiers began to come home from World War I. It was a surprise that they brought the germs with them from the battlefield where the bodies coming home. In the course of this flu epidemic there where literally millions of Americans who died. They had what they called "pest houses". They turned churches, and schools into "pest houses". Everything was closed down. There where no public affairs allowed. You couldn't attend church on Sunday as they turned these churches and schools, firehouses into "pest houses". They would take sick people out of their homes and put them on litters or on the floor with blankets because they were destined to die within a few hours anyway. The people had to volunteer to make coffins. The undertakers were so busy digging graves that they sometimes buried two to three people in the same grave. There were no coffins, they were just pine boxes and I could remember a particular incident where my whole family became sick except for two members. My younger brother was the sickly one of the family, he managed to avoid getting the infection. My father, thank God didn't get the flu.

My father and my grandmother lived with us at the time and it was their obligation to take care of the sick ones. My father said to them, "there are army doctors that could help"; so they sent for army doctors to take care of the sick because local doctors couldn't handle the load. My father said to the doctor this day, pointing to me, I was 5 years old at the time, my father said that he was not worried about that fellow because he sleeps all the time. The army doctor said that along with the flu that their was also a problem of sleeping sickness. He said that if you are smart you would rouse him up every half hour and take him out of his sleep and keep his mind awake so he won't die. During the time of this sickness I had a dream, (who could remember a dream that happened 74 years ago). I dreamed that I was on our front porch, in those days the street wasn't paved along 209. We lived along 209. And I dreamed that I was looking down from the porch into an open grave, and the coffin in the grave opened up and this neighbor man, Tom McCready, who was a much older man than me of course, began to come up toward me on the porch. I panicked and in my dream I was wearing an overcoat that belonged to an older brother and I attempted to turn around to run away back into the house. I kept tripping over this overcoat and screaming and panicking and my father told the doctor about this later. He said that this was the crisis you were going through. He said that if he had tripped and fell there he would have died. But I fought my way back into the house.

Bill Lynagh

ON PROHIBITION

During this era, alcohol had little or no impression on me, I was too young. However, I can remember my grandmother used to make her own beer in the cellar. My uncle and his son used to bring her hops, because he lived in the country and could obtain such things. I can still remember visiting his home and was amazed that he had a room in which one corner was all filled up with apples. It seemed to me that those apples went from the floor up into the ceiling.

I knew this uncle was a "moonshiner"; he always lived in fear of the law. My husband's sister had a "speakeasy" in her cellar for years, but no one talks about that. At home we harbored a still for years in the back of a closet. It was sewn into burlap, so I actually never saw it open.

Kathleen Merchlinsky

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THE DEPRESSION

You couldn't buy coffee. You couldn't buy any butter. They would ration it off to you and also the gas was rationed. You would get rations for how many people there where in the house.

Lula Kitchen

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JUST THINKING

When I was going to school, the kids would get excused from school to go to the doctor's office for medicine. The mother would tell them to go and get something to move their bowels. The kids would say, "I want to get some medicine for balls to move." They didn't know the difference. They also used to go for white salve, heating salve to heal a cut. You didn't have to pay for the salve.

The father of these children was working for this company and the company used to take a $1.50 to pay the doctor for the whole month. The family would get all they needed for the home, and the doctor would come to the house and make a call and they even delivered babies for that $1.50 a month.

Maggie Markus

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THE MILLIONAIRES' CLUB

Years ago during the Depression some young fellows organized a club. They called themselves **The Millionaires Club.** For their main source of income they would go down to the St. Clair coal yards and they would steal coal. They would bag it and carry it up on their backs and sell it door to door. They would steal it at night and start selling in the morning. The police couldn't prove where they got the coal.

There was a mission priest that came in to conduct a mission at the German Church in St. Clair. The old pastor at that time who was kind of a hard-boiled old man. This missionary priest was a fire and brimstone preacher and somebody got these Millionaire guys to go to church which they hadn't done in a long time. They decided this preacher was worth hearing. He put the fear of God in them. They were making a living stealing coal and that they decided on his urging to go to confession. The priest was hearing the confessions and their main sin was "Father, I stole coal from a railroad car". After about 20 or so young men confessed the same sin, he became so irate that he kicked the door open and said, "ain't that car empty yet?"

Bill Lynagh

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MINE STRIKE

In about 1899 my grandmother lived in a basement of a house. I believe it was in the first ward of Shenandoah and there was a big mine strike going on at the time. And the neighbors knocked at her door and told her and her children to get out of the house because they were going to burn the house down. Because the man upstairs is a scabber and he is going to work and they are on strike. So she got her children and she went out and a big mob came along and they were going to beat that man to death that day. But he ran out another door, he was gone and because of that they didn't burn the house down. But they hung him in effigy, they filled up clothing and made it look like a man and they burned that outside. It was a very very scary time for her, she had to stay at her sisters house for several days until things calmed down.

Another time, she was very poor because her husband left her with two children. I had the feeling that it was around the time of the Molly Maguires but I could be wrong about the time. She was sleeping on the floor of this same basement when they heard a horseman come up to the door. He opened the door and threw a bag of coins in the house to her to help her. She was so grateful for the coins. She never did find out who did it. The times were very bad situations that we were not familiar with.

At that time when things were so violent, they would bring in the militia which was policemen on horses. And they would have to go around with night sticks beating the people to keep them under control. If one man went to work while the rest was striking, they just wouldn't stand for it. They would burn his house down. They would beat his family. They were absolutely treacherous. My grandmother lived in this bloody first ward which was filled with barrooms and there where always fights in the neighborhood. As children we were always told to be careful.

Kathleen Merchlinsky

HOOVERSVILLE

Hooversville was a name for a makeshift community which was created by the homeless and unemployed during the Depression. It was named for President Hoover. The people gathered together whatever scraps of lumber, tarpaper and cardboard to make these shanties or shacks. In our area, Hooversville was located near an open dump, which was very common at that time, about a mile from the town.

These people were very self-sufficient. They planted vegetable gardens, fruit trees, grapevines, raised chickens and ducks.

These villages existed until President Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected and began to put an end to the Depression. Some people stayed there until the coal companies stripped the area for coal.

Apparently there were Hooversville's all across the states. The inhabitants of Hooversville were snubbed by the towns people.

Kathleen Merchlinsky

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PROHIBITION

One of the most unfortunate laws ever enacted in the United States was the Volstead Act of 1981. It is better known as the Prohibition Law. In a short time it became responsible for creating an entire new culture of lawlessness which would spawn an era of what would become known as "Gangsterism" crime organizations which, until then, had functioned as neighborhood goon groups whose source of crime was derived from "selling" protection to local merchants who either contributed or suffered the destruction of their business places by roving gangs of ruffians.

The ring leaders of these local gangs very soon discovered that they could make a great deal more money, much easier, by importing alcohol from neighboring "legal" countries and distributing it in American cities and towns. These operations became known as "Rum-Runners". In a short few years gang lords became so wealthy that they began to "buy" protection (in much the same way they used to provide it to merchants) by bribing local police forces who would look the other way when "rum" shipments were being transported into or out of their jurisdiction. As the corruption spread so did the crime. Rival gangs began to declare war on one another for violating the sanctity of their territory.

Such infamous gang leaders as Al Capone, Legs Diamond, "Bugsey" Siegel, Lucky Luciano, and many others employed small armies of "hit-men" who thought nothing of gunning down one of ten or more of an opponents "army". One of the most famous, or infamous, of these events was the notable "Valentine Day Massacre" in Chicago when eleven gang members were cornered in a garage while preparing a shipment of booze and were summarily lined up against a wall and machine gunned down in a variable blood bath of carnage. While the city police authorities claimed they could not discover who the executioners were, and never made any arrests, the citizens of America were so outraged

PROHIBITION (continued)

that they began to demand that the Federal Government do something about it. Thus began the country-wide movement that would eventually lead to the repeal of the Volstead Act in 1933 or thereabouts.

Meantime, the gangsters who had committed the Valentines Day Massacre were hunted down by fellow members of the murdered victims and it would be revealed, years later, that most, if not all of the killers who did that job, had, themselves been gunned down.

Locally, the leaders of the rum-runners were in many cases, respected citizens who built themselves mansions and became community leaders, attending church and civic meetings and even public leaders. One story, of note was the case of a big bootlegger who wondered why his "shipments" were being confiscated by the Feds (after he had paid for protection from the local authorities) and upon close investigation learned that his own brother who had a weakness for over-imbibing would accept a fifty dollar bribe from the Feds to tell them when a railroad car load of booze was due to be placed at a local rail point. Of course the "boss" fired his brother and as his troubles in that regard ended, at least for the time being.

William P. Lynagh

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WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION (WPA) AND CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS (CCC)

During the 1930's, the United States was in the midst of a Depression. This meant there was a great deal of unemployment, people bought only the necessities of life.

The Civilian Conservation Corps was an agency created by the Federal Government for young men and boys to work, especially in forest regions to conserve our natural resources. They had to leave home and were housed in camps located in the forests. They also sent most of their limited salary home to their families. It helped some of the men go on to successful lives, while others it didn't.

The Works Progress Administration was created by the Federal Government to help the older men who had worked at previous jobs, and especially those that had families. They repaired and built highways, repaired public properties, controlled the flow of rivers, such as the Schuylkill, constructed fences around high school stadiums. Pottsville High School Stadium is a good example. They also set up cultural and educational classes. The salary was about $15.00 weekly with bosses and supervisors getting about $20.00. Some men took advantage and became successful, but many just wasted their time, and collected their pay. Life was tough because there was no improvement in the future. The Great Depression ended when World War Ii started because so many men and women went into the armed forces, and both men and women worked in war related factories. One of my ancestors, Lottie Augusta Green Bush, was a "Rosie the Riveteer". The female defense workers, during World War II were referred to in this way.

Daniel Kemple

MONEY WAS TIGHT

When I was 14 I worked housework for $5.00 a week. Two nights I ushered in the movies and any other odd jobs. I would get down on my hands and knees and scrub a barber shop floor for little or nothing. I would bring that money home, give it to my mother and I would get a $.25 a week for spending money. To me that was the most wonderful thing in the world knowing that I was helping my mother with all those children plus the fact that I knew that $.25 on a Sunday would buy me a cantaloupe sundae which I loved dearly.

In my home we loved the holidays. My oldest sister would get a new outfit say for Easter: the following Easter that outfit was handed down to the next girl in line. There was no such thing as getting a new outfit for every holiday like it is now. My mother wasn't able to buy these things even with my father living because he was working in the mines and the wages were low. I remember when my father was buried; he died of miners asthma. At that time there wasn't any Black Lung Compensation, so my mother took in washing and we had to help her with it. She washed clothes with a wash board. After taking in washing she was able to buy a wooden washer,it had ridges on the inside and a little gyrator that went around; you turned the wheel on the outside, that would rotate the gyrator. We each had to take a turn of 10 to 15 minutes turning the wheel to wash the clothes. Somehow we made ends meet.

Helen Nash

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FIRST JOB

My mother took me out of school when I was fifteen years old she said that I was old enough. I had seven brothers and I was in the middle. She said that I was old enough to earn money for our own clothes. I had to wear my brother's knickers instead of wearing a dress. I only had one dress for church and Sunday school. My mother said that I was old enough to go to work. She said "you don't need to go to school, you are smart enough to learn by yourself." So I worked and I made 20 pounds of potato salad a day and I cleaned a lady's house for $5.00 a week.

For $.25 you could buy a regular pair of shoes and for about $3.00 I could get a dress, a slip, and shoes and stockings. Onetime I was walking along the street and I saw a pocketbook laying on the ground. I usually don't pick up junk, but I picked this up and I took the darn thing home. The lining of the purse was ripped so I opened the lining and there was $7.00 in it. What a day! I went shopping for myself and bought a dress, a coat, a pair of shoes, a hat and a pocketbook. I had $1.00 left over. This was in the 1920's.

Dorothy Rebhorn

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THE RAILROAD

The Lehigh Valley Railroad ran right behind my house on Lehigh Street in Shenandoah. The people living so close to the rails had a love affair with it and the huge iron locomotives. We knew the Engineers, the Conductors, the Watchmen on the corners, we did not have crossing barriers or flashing lights, there were little houses manned twenty-four hours a day. These men were our neighbors.

We used the trains as a source of entertainment. We would always run to the window to wave to the engineers and the men in the caboose and they in turn watched for the little girls in the kitchen window. The railroad bed was also our playground. Some of the things we used to do was put pennies on the tracks and nails to have them flattened out and stretched. My girlfriend and I would fill tobacco cans with bits of colored glass and bury them between the sills. We would be thrilled when we would find a loose railroad spike, I still have some. And of course we spent many hours trying to see who could balance themselves the longest teetering one foot after the other on the rail. We picked weeds along the tracks pretending they were flowers.

There was a slight incline behind our house and if the weather was damp or rainy the locomotives had to make an extra effort to get up there, they would huff and puff so hard that they would rattle and shake our houses, we kids would jump onto our beds for a ride, we thought it was great fun. Another thing we liked to do when long freights were passing was to count the cars and see if that number was on that car, for instance if car 32 had a 32 on it.

We always had cinders in our hair from the coal the locomotives burned. On occasion we got to be passengers on the trains, the passenger cars were interesting as they had seats which the back flipped and you could face people or not. It seems to me that every car had a toilet on it. You could look right down the hole and see the railroad ties passing underneath, guess where the waste went?

Of course there were accidents where people lost lives or limbs. Sometimes robbing coal from cars, sometimes from hopping the train to get from one place to the other. My uncle used to hop a freight car to go to see his sister in Shamokin, he would take a shopping bag with food for her family, this was during the depression. Hobos were a common sight for us, my grandmother would offer them coffee and a sandwich when they would be stopped for a while behind the house. They were always so grateful for a handout.

During the second world war the trains took on a different look, the passenger cars were filled with servicemen on their way to various camps, there were many flatbed cars with huge tarps over them carrying tanks, Jeeps, trucks, airplane parts, they looked like giant caterpillars winding their way along the railroad tracks.

People were often late for work or school if a train got stuck at a crossing, sometimes when my girlfriend and I wanted to be together and there was a train in our way (a still one) we would crawl under the cars to get to each other, a very dangerous thing to do. But they played a big part in our lives and we dearly loved those iron monsters.

Kathleen Merchlinsky

1920'S WEDDING ATTIRE

Oct. 18, 1922
Stella & Walter Andrukonis;
Ida Dominitis, Victor Smecktka

Sept. 14, 1921
Anna & Joseph Gibowicz;
Stella Wasilewski, Leo Federowicz

HAND-ME-DOWNS

Clothes were so important when I was growing up that we took very good care of them. When I came home from school I would run to my room and take off my good clothes and shoes. I would then spend the rest of my day bare footed. I loved that bare footed feeling.

My clothes used to come from my 44 year old aunt. She was a little hunchbacked. She used to wear dresses that were fringed, and her shoes were pointed and buttoned all the way up to her knees. Even though she was shorter than I was, I really was glad for the handout. I can remember one time that a neighbor moved away and my family and I went over their house to clean out the basement. My brother picked up an old pair of shoes and said "Here's a pair of shoes for Dorothy". It was really rough, but we survived. We actually were better off for all our troubles.

Dorothy Rebhorn

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WEDDING ATTIRE

Because of the financially difficult times in the 1920's many young ladies preferred to wear a suit for their wedding. These were usually navy blue, brown, or other dark color, a practical suit that could then be used for church, funerals and other occasions. This was topped with a fox fur neckpiece and a large plume hat usually completed the outfit.

At that time the bridal party had only one couple as attendants and the best man usually provided the maid of honor's outfit.

My mother, who was widowed when her first husband died in the flu epidemic was maid of honor quite a few times for many of her girl friends. Because her outfits were provided by the best man and she was the attendant for many weddings, she was one of the best dressed women in Shenandoah.

Some young ladies preferred the traditional white dress or gown and veil which had an elaborate head piece.

During World War II many young ladies preferred to get married in suits because often times the wedding took place during the furlough of a soldier.

I was married after World War II and chose to have my wedding gown made out of my husband's parachute.

Lorraine Stanton

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A FASHIONABLE WEDDING

I wore a blue velvet suit that my mother made for me. My bridesmaid, her mother made a green velvet suit for her. I still have it hanging in the attic.

Out of 20 girlfriends, about 19 wore suits or dresses. Most of us had only one bridesmaid. Most of the suits and dresses were homemade, our mother's mad them, we didn't buy wedding gowns. The only ones that had the big weddings with gowns were mostly children with fairly wealthy parents. They just didn't indulge in wedding gowns. We thought we were very practical and we used our money to buy furniture.

I guess it was just the style. I think everybody copied from each other. The style was so practical and times were so difficult financially that often times if parents had a lot of money they would buy the bedroom set for the bride and groom, if they couldn't afford the bedroom set at least they purchased the pillows. In ethnic groups, Polish and Lithuanian, if a girl had a shower most likely her mother would buy her the two pillows.

My mother wanted my sisters and I to have gowns. We went along with her wish. I never went along 100% with my mother on anything, but I was practical like she is. I had my wedding gown made out of my husbands parachute. The trail of it was 36 yards long. All they had to make was a lace top. This was after World War II. My wedding dress only cost me $50.

Kathy Merchlinsky

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SNEAKERS AND JEANS IN THE 20's AND 30's

You would never wear jeans or sneakers to school in my day. The farmers and miners lived in jeans but never the school kids. The wearing of these things said that you were poor.

The proper thing for girls to wear was a dress; the boys just had to have knickers to look sharp.

Louise Klitzner

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SHOES

I wasn't born until 1928 and I lived with a grandmother and an uncle. But I do remember many times having shoes with holes in them. Everytime I see a Hershey box to this day I can remember cutting out innersoles for myself for in my shoes. My uncle had a lathe in the cellar and he could put soles and heels on shoes but we didn't even have the 10 cents to buy the soles. When we did have them I remember them putting the soles on. You still had to put the innersoles in or you would have a hole in the shoes. You could buy a pair of shoes for 25 cents. People didn't even have the 10 cents and the 25 cents to do it at that time. I always remember the holes in the shoes.

Kathy Merchlinsky

SCHOOL FASHION

When we went to school we were supposed to have longer hair. The girls thought it was very feminine and we would always wear a bow in our hair. But with having bows in our hair the boys would always pull them out and that would be the end of the bow. Our clothes were as fashionable as they are today. You wore sashes to match your dress and you wore a bow in the back. Many of the girls wore cotton dresses because their parents couldn't afford anything better. Most of the dresses had been hand made by their mothers because they couldn't afford to go out and buy them. They had little cat sleeves (little ruffle sleeves), a little round neck, a straight ordinary dress and a sash, or it could be a little print cotton dress.

When I was around 8, 9 or 10; parents' couldn't go out and buy you a slip even. At that time parent's bought a 10 pound bag or a 25 pound bag of flour and the flour bags where usually flowered. Our mother's made our slips from the flowered bags. Even little panties. The bags were heavy cotton and they had white background and little blue corn flowers or they had little red roses on them. The manufacturers I think realized what the mothers where doing, they helped a lot. The panties where called bloomers. If we had one or two dresses for school we were very happy. We had one dress for Sunday,one pair of shoes for school and one pair of dress shoes. That's all we had. We always wore a Black purse if we were older girls in their teens, because our parents couldn't afford to buy a color for every dress we owned.

Louise Klitzner

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FEED BAG DRESSES

We used to go to a place where they sold feed and they had very pretty feed bags, very colorful. My mother would make some dresses out of the feed bags and she would make them with a big skirt and when you grew out of that she would make it into pillowcases. Nothing went to waste. If your sheets wore down in the middle they where cut down through the middle and they put the two sides together. You really used everything. When they where finished you used them for rags.

All the girls back then knew how to sew, crochet, embroider and knit. Their mothers taught them how to do all these things. We had to make our own clothes. I remember taking an old coat and cutting it apart (I was 10 years old) and I made a jumper out of it. My mother worked in a factory and she would bring scraps home, long strips of material maybe 3 inches wide and we would sit and sew those strips together and make a dress out of them and also carpets. They made patchwork quilts out of things. They even took the feathers and made pillows with them.

Kathleen Merchlinsky

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Garments for School Girls

By ETHEL F. CHRISTOPHER

THE [illegible] dress of [illegible] style for school girls from six to seven years. Sometimes the yoke is gathered to a yoke and again at the waistline where the skirt is attached. This part of the garment being so regular Latest flare at the lower edge a wide belt or girdle concealing the joining of the parts. Again the dress will have an straight side or box plaits from yoke to hem, but a girdle or belt is still used, as in the former style.

Crisp little collar-and-cuff or cape outfits and cuffs to match, all lining of hemstitched linen give freshness to these cloth suits. Sometimes these accessories are trimmed with self ruffles or ruching, or this part will be of contrasting color.

Russian blouses of cloth or serge with velvet collars, cuffs and belts are worn with full skirts of the same material when two-piece dresses are wanted, and these are very becoming to the slender girl. Frequently the blouse takes the place of an out-door garment, a [illegible] lawn or taffeta worn being worn beneath it. When the Russian blouse is worn as a jacket, fur trims the collar and cuffs, or these portions are made entirely of close-haired fur or fur fabric. Plaid taffeta or striped mannish wool fabrics are pretty materials to use for the school girl's blouse which should be tailored in effect, buttoning in front, with sailor collar not too open at the neck, and full-length sleeves with mannish cuffs. Bright ties of silk or satin knotted under the sailor collars will brighten up dark blue, brown or russet serge dresses.

In coats the inclination is to the skirt-length topcoat in some one of the very stylish shapings which are new this Autumn. Nearly all have huge pockets of the fancy patch variety, and most have large collars and deep cuffs. Rough fabrics such as [illegible] camel's-hair and the like are much used for these coats with fur or velvet or a combination of both for the cuffs and [illegible]

Sailor-Plaited Serge Dress for Girls from 10 to 16 years. Price $15. Best & Co., New York

quence the younger generation are free of movement, graceful and able to walk and breathe properly.

Stylish little mocha or doeskin gloves, cut almost like a man's, are worn by the school girl. Sometimes these have ruffs, sometimes a single button-clasp. With the sunday suit go white kid, still of mannish cut and sometimes colored kid bands at the wrists. Fabric gloves, fleece-lined, and so closely resembling mocha and chamois as to be hardly distinguishable, are very serviceable, and look well. Washable kid, too, and real chamois, too, give excellent wear, even for the hard service the school glove is heir to to endure.

Little girls from the kindergarten age to ten or thereabouts will wear to a considerable extent washable frocks of linen, chambray, dark and gingham to school, their extra weight underwear [illegible]

FASHIONS

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

HAIR

To a girl or a woman, the care and management of her hair played a very important part in our lives. When we were young our mothers or grandmothers took over the job. Hair was kept long, usually in plaits or long curls called "baloney" curls, in my case since I did not have natural curls my hair had to be set in "kids", which were wires covered with cotton and finished with very soft, hand stitched leather. The hair was wrapped around the kids, the ends were turned over hold the curl secure until dry. When the curlers were removed you had a head full of bouncy curls.

We had our hair washed with soap (Ivory or Fels Naptha). I was not aware of shampoo. Adults often rinsed their hair with a beaten egg or beer to make it shine. As kids we often got lice or "cooties" as they were called. It was quite a chore when one person in a house got lice the whole family had to be deloused, this was done in various ways. First the hair had to be fine combed, someone had to remove the nits, which are lice eggs, then you were doused with either Larkspur, vinegar, or kerosene. Your head was then wrapped up for about an hour. This took care of the problem, until the next time.

In the olden days you brushed your hair 100 times a day, to keep healthy and shiney. As I said before our hair was kept long, my mother was 27 years old before her hair was ever cut. Much like Crystle Gale. In the Forties we used devices such as Chignons, Snoods. We were the Pony tail era, we also wore pageboys and upsweeps.

And so it goes -- people were always obsessed with their hair and always will be!

Kathleen Merchlinsky

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IF TODAY'S KIDS ONLY KNEW

I: is very interesting today to see the opportunities that children have. Nine times out of ten they do not appreciate them. We had a family of nine and we all had chores to do. We had a garden every year, we all had to help plant and dig up the soil. The rewards were certainly great because I can remember as a child if we were hungry we would run out to the garden and pick up a cucumber, rub it on our jeans and eat it. We didn't think of washing it off. Tomatoes were picked the same way. We went out and picked blueberries every year. We would leave the house around 5 o'clock in the morning and go up into the mountains to pick them Then we would come back and sell them, and the money we earned was put away for clothes for school.

Today children are spoiled. They have all kinds of food to eat everyday. They eat nuts, candy, etc. whenever they want.

When I grew up we didn't have candy much. We waited for the holidays for our treats.

At Christmas time we couldn't wait until we could run to our stockings. They were filled with fruit, nuts and candy. These things made our day.

Helen Nash

THEN AND NOW

Let's compare things as they were in the good old days with how they are now. I can envision two columns, a **then column** and a **now column.** Say for instance in the good old days in the **then column** we sent picture postcards to different people in our communities.

THEN **NOW**

A postcard was $.01 and the postage at that time was $.01. Today in 1993 postcards in our community range from $.25 to $.35, postage is $.29.

In the **then column** in the good old days we played with Kewpie dolls; they were the rage. They were sold for many, many years. They are now considered antiques.

in the **now column** they have Cabbage Patch Dolls or Couch Potato dolls or Trolls. I don't know if they are going to be collectible but maybe in 50 to 100 years they will be.

In the **then column** we played with dolls with porcelain faces, some had more porcelain then just the face, but mine was only a porcelain face doll. They are now considered antiques.

In the **now column,** many, many businesses are copying them. Because doll collecting is one of the biggest collectors items in the world today.

In the **then column** in the good old days almost every community had a general store. Sometimes it was run by one of the mining companies, but almost every community had a general store. The buildings are still standing in Frackville and in Saint Clair. I don't know about the other towns, but every community had a general store.

In the **now column** that would compare with a K Mart of today. K Mart is nothing new except a big general store.

In the **then column** in what I call the good old days boys built buildings with wooden blocks or metal elector sets.

In the **now column** children still build buildings and bridges and so forth, but there is plastic legos. So it is really an old idea but improved on.

Years ago when we had babies we called the carriage and go cart or perambulator. Today it is called a baby carriage or stroller. Some of the companies copied the strollers and the baby carriages as they were made in the good old days especially in England they were very high perambulators and they are copied from the good old day kind.

In the **then column** many people had Reed Furniture. Many livingrooms and parlors were furnished by these Reed Furniture and they are now considered antiques.

In the **now column** a lot of peoples patio furniture are copied from the Reed Furniture but they are made out of bamboo or wicker, but are still in the same style as the Reed Furniture in the good old days.

In the **then column,** every Saturday night everyone strolled the main street of certain towns. Shenandoah and Pottsville were known for that. If you went to Shenandoah on a Saturday night there would be hundreds of people strolling the town. Young girls strolled the main street with there friends and all the boys sat around the store entrances and whistled at the girls and many of the girls were with there boyfriends that day. Older people strolled main street because when they would see someone they would often stop and chat.

In the **now column,** people go malling, young girls stroll the mall and boys sit around and whistle to them and older folks stroll the mall, meet people and have coffee. This is just an adaptation of what we did in the good old days.

In the **then column,** we had ice boxes and every second day you got a $.10 piece of ice. And if you made lemonade you would just chip some ice off of it and put that in your pitcher. Today, you have your refrigerators with automatic ice makers. So a lot of the things in the **then column** was the idea but in the **now column** there were just improvements on that old idea.

In the **then column,** we had victrolas,ours at home was an RCA. You cranked it on the side. You had a very heavy record that you played and along with that record were old classical music and we enjoyed listening to it. From there it went to the plastic records 33 1/3 size and the 45 size.

In the **now column,** we have compact discs, but they are still a copy of things that were in the **then column.**

In the **then column,** if you didn't have a bathroom in your house you had an outhouse about 100 feet from your yard.

In the **now column,** an adaptation of the outhouse is the Job Johnny. When construction are in building buildings or roads you often see the plastic outhouses near where they are constructing. A copy of the outhouse.

Some people in the old days often said; **"what goes around, comes around".**

But then there are some differences in the **then column** and **now columns.** For instance at Halloween when I was a child we made our costumes, took the idea out of nursery rhyme characters. My mother made my costume and it was Little Bo Peep another one would be Little Red Riding Hood or Humpty Dumpty or maybe the most horrible would be the boy dressed in red as the devil. We also after we rang the bell and said trick or treat we either had to sing a song or say a poem or do a tap dance if we knew how.

In the **now column,** it seems as grotesque the costume is the more it is liked. The children just ring the bell and say trick or treat and they are handed a treat and they are on there merry way, there is no performance. I thought we had more fun.

In the **then column,** most movies had a happy ending. The cowboys in the movies who wore white hats were good men and if he wore a black hat he was a bad man. The Goodies always won. The movie always had a happy ending. Truth prevailed.

In the **now column,** it seems that though the more horrible the film is the better it is accepted. Some of the romance movies are on the line of being pornographic and they are not teaching our children the truth about love and romance.

Perhaps someone else can add to the **then and now column.**

QUOTES

Stewie Gilliam quotes his father as saying, "There are the givers and the takers. The givers sleep good and the takers eat good."

John Wayne once said, "The good dIe young and the bad live on so they have time to repent for their sins."

My old Aunt Liz used to say, "There is so much bad in the best of us and so much good in the worst of us, that it hardly behooves the best of us to talk about the rest of us."

"Show me your friends and I'll tell you what you are."

"Pretty is as pretty does".

"Familiarity breeds contempt."

"The devil makes mischief for idle hands".

"Waste not, want not".

"Fools walk where Angels fear to tread".

"Silence is golden".

QUOTES (continued)

"Loneliness is sad; solitude is golden".

"There is no fool like an old fool".

"Charity begins at home".

"Never put all your eggs in one basket".

"Let he who is without sin cast the first stone".

"A new broom sweeps clean".

"What goes around comes around".

"A stitch in time saves nine".

"Rain before seven stops before eleven".

"A rose by any other name still smells as sweet".

"You cannot make a silk purse from a sows ear".

"Eavesdroppers never hear anything good about themselves".

"Early birds get the worms".

QUOTES (continued)

"Never say never"?

"The fruit does not fall far from the tree".

"All that glitters is not gold".

"To err is human, to forgive is devine".

"A little nonsense now and then is relished by the best of men".

"Fools names like fools faces are always seen in public places".

"You must plan your life as if you were going to live forever. But you must live your life as if today was your last day".

A POEM:

If you tried and have not won, never stop for crying.
Alls that great and good is done just by patient trying.
If by easy work you beat, who the more will praise you.
Gaining victory by defeat, that's the test that trys you.

"You can only take two things with you when you die. Your good deeds and your bad deeds".

OLD WIVES TALES

When you clean the hair from a comb or brush you must not throw it outside, because if the birds make a nest with it you will get a headache.

OLD WIVES TALES (continued)

You should never give a knife or a pin as a gift because they will cut or stick friendship.

When you are with someone walking around the mall or street, you must never let a pole or person come between you. It is considered bad luck.

If your shoelace opens or a fly bothers you, someone is thinking of you.

And of course everyone knows enough to avoid black cats, don't walk under a ladder and it goes on and on.

Good Luck everyone. Find a four leaf clover.

Kathleen Merchlinsky

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ARMISTICE DAY

When I see the year 1918 in print, it always brings to mind the date November 11th. On this day at 11:00 a.m., the church bells would ring and the colliery whistles would blow. It was my custom for my grandmother and I (at her insistence) to kneel down and say a prayer for the souls of those who lost their lives in the First World War. She would then tell me of that day in 1918 when peace was declared. People were running through the streets, from house to house, shouting with joy, "the war is over, the war is over!" She made it sound so exciting that I can never forget it. I wasn't even born until 10 years later.

Kathleen Merchlinsky

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RATIONING

What I remember about rationing is that it created a "black market", Butchers in small neighborhood stores kept choice meats and scarce items such as sugar, cigarettes and butter for their friends or the highest price offered. People who smoked begged those who did not to get cigarettes for them. Oleo margarine came in a plastic bag. It was white and you added a capsule of yellow coloring to make it look like butter. It did not taste too good. Gasoline was rationed too. I think you got coupons in the mail according to the size of the family, something like food stamps now.

Kathy Merchlinsky

SOLDIERS OF WORLD WAR I

SOLDIERS OF WORLD WAR II

Kathleen Merchlinsky

Trivia Question

To what game piece did the Reading Eagle compare the red and blue tokens used as change for ration stamps during World War II?

ANSWER: **Tiddlywinks**

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ON WAR

The five Sullivan brothers were on the same ship when it was torpedoed and they all lost their lives. So after that they made a law in Congress that brothers couldn't serve on the same ship at the same time. But they got a special dispensation from the military authorities to go to work on the same ship. That is why they happened to be altogether when the ship went down.

We do have four Allison brothers from Port Carbon that where killed in the Civil War. There is a very nice monument in Port Carbon in memory of that event.

Dorothy Rebhorn

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FLAGS IN WORLD WAR II

There were little ornamental flags sometimes 6 inches to 8 inches square. They had a star on for every person that was from that house that participated in the war. Say, for instance, my brother in-law was in the war and he lived with us, so we had one star on the flag. If you had two brothers or a brother and sister then you had two stars on the flag.

The mothers were called the Gold Star Mothers. My mother belonged to this club. She was a Gold Star Mother and they used to gather up the girls and take them down to the different camps and have parties for them. My mother had a sign in the window stating that she was a Gold Star Mother. She was very proud of it.

If they had one son in the war they had one flag with a silver star, two sons they had two flags. If the person had been killed then the flag would have a gold star. That is where the Gold Star Mothers' Society came from. In Shenandoah, the highway is named the Gold Star Highway for that. The Gold Star Highway was named for the people who were killed in the service, in honor of the first man from Shenandoah who was the Gold Star victim by the name of Damato. That is why they have the Damato Post Legion named after him.

Dorothy Rebhorn

AFTER WORLD WAR II

When the concentration camps were liberated they took the survivors out and put them in different camps to be processed and sent to their own countries. The Poles, the Russians, the Hungarians, the Yugoslavs, the Lithuanians, all those nations that were in the prison camps, all those captured during the war. My experience with this was that there was so much bitterness and hatred on both sides, but the Americans were too kind and trustworthy to the enemy. They took so many chances trying to be kind to the children, sharing their rations and candy, we found out the hard way that you could not trust even the youngest children. They were so skilled in warfare that when we sat down to rest if they got the chance they would sneak a hand grenade in your backpack and pull the pin after you had it on, many an American was wounded or killed this way after the war was over. The children could use an automatic weapon as well as any adult. When a child points a gun at you it was kill or be killed, that was the very hardest part of the liberation.

You could not trust anyone at that time. The Americans found this hard, because most of our soldiers were loving and trusting people by nature. So when we told them to move, they did move or pay the penalty, the penalty wasn't too sweet. I wouldn't like to mull over that. Some of our men could be tough and mean, which they had a right to be, because they had relatives and friends who were killed or hurt by these enemies.

It was very hard to build up trust between the Americans, the Germans and the Russians. The Russians were supposed to be our allies, but they actually fought against us and the Germans, here we were giving everything we had, especially our love for our fellow man. The American soldiers could express love better than any other country in the world. Even today yet, and that was the nice part.

Bill Umbenhen

OTHER MEMORIES

Pearl Harbor

I remember very well that infamous day of Sunday, December 7, 1941. One of my friends and I were in Reading, Pennsylvania for a weekend and, as we were going to lunch, someone told us the Japanese had struck Pearl Harbor. From then on until 1946 our lives were turned upside down. My father took a machinist course given by the government after which we moved to Ridley Park, Pennsylvania as he had been hired by Sun Ship in Chester.

During the war everything was rationed. We had coupons or tokens for a lot of things, such as shoes, gasoline, meat, sugar, etc. We did without some food items many times if we were saving for a holiday or other special time.

Frequently there were blackouts when we had to stay indoors or, if we were on the street, stand in a doorway till the "all-clear" sounded. A friend and I worked in Ocean City, New Jersey waitressing that summer and it was very scary on the boardwalk at times.

If a family had a son (no females were taken) in the service,they placed a little flag in the window. The star on that flag was blue but if the son was killed the star was changed to gold. The mothers of sons killed in the war were called "Gold Star Mothers". It was definitely not the best of times.

Catherine Kemple

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A MOTHER'S PRIDE

After World War I ended, they had many parades. The soldiers would parade with the high school bands. This little old lady was standing on the sidelines as her son was one of the soldiers who just returned. He was marching with a military group. She was so enthralled watching her son and turned around to someone and said, "That's my Jimmie (her name was Warmkassel) there, he is the only one in step." They would tell that story until the day she died.

Bill Lynagh

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PERSONALITIES OF THE DAY

We were not in touch with the outside world very much. Up until the time of the war we really didn't know much of the outside world. We were children enjoying our lives and we weren't interested. Only through movies, newsreels and the local paper did we learn about the outside world. The radio helped too, but we weren't allowed to listen very much because it burned too much electricity. The heroes of the day in my opinion, not just heroes, but the outstanding people were: John L. Lewis and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Shirley Temple was revered and the Dionne Quintuplets and Dr. Defoe who delivered the Quintuplets were also big celebrities. My favorite personality and my lifelong fascination was with the Royal Family of England. Elizabeth was always my hero and she is still today.

KING COAL

ANTHRACITE COAL AND HOUSEHOLD FUEL

The anthracite (hard coal) region is located northeastward from Pottsville to Scranton. There are untold millions of tons of anthracite coal underneath the earth's surface. Anthracite was the primary source of power in the eastern United States from about the last half of the 19th Century to about 1950 or the end of World War II. During that time, the anthracite region was very prosperous. It was also a time of much immigration from Ireland and Eastern Europe. This area became a region of Welshmen, Irishmen and Polish and Lithuanians. The predominant religions were Protestant and Catholic. The clergy were very powerful and important people. Education was minimal. My father and mother never got beyond the third grade level. Even though times were prosperous, the people had a difficult time. They were at the mercy of the coal companies. When unions were recognized, conditions did improve.

In Cumbola most of the inhabitants were lower middle class economically based upon anthracite coal mining who were poor but did not know it. This did not bother them because they were all in the same boat. Travel was restricted because most of the people did not have cars, and trolleys were the principal means of travel between Tamaqua and Pottsville. There was no television which meant we could not see how the rich and famous lived or what possessions one could have if they had the money. The radio became a source of pleasure and information. I can remember listening to the Tunney-Dempsey fight from the porch of another resident because we did not have a radio.

One way of reducing expenses was to either work in what were known as coal holes or to buy coal as it came from the illegal mines. This meant cracking and separating the coal from the rock and dirt by hand. On Wood Street, we had a large yard with a replaceable front fence so that a truck could go to our backyard to dump its load. From about the time I was 16 to after I returned from the Army and was teaching in Pottsville, I continued to do this kind of work. It wasn't easy to say the least.

First let me describe a coal hole. This was a form of bootlegging or stealing because the coal companies owned the land and, therefore, the coal. They were also known as Bootleg Holes. During The Depression, a time when many men were laid off from the collieries, they took to bootlegging. The bootlegger was a man who knew the location of the underground coal which were in veins. One layer of coal, of varying thickness, then another layer of rock, and so on. Most of these veins were close to the surface, therefore, it didn't take much work to reach the coal. Most of these small mines were either in shaft or slope form. A shaft was vertical and a slope slanted. As they dug the slope or shaft,they protected themselves from cave-ins by timbering. Timber consisted of different sizes of cut-down logs. Every six or so feet, they would stop to timber. Two strong trees were put on each side of the gangway vertically. Two more vertical pieces of timber were erected from three to six feet from the first two. Horizontal pieces of timber were put up from the vertical timber. Smaller pieces of timber where put up to protect the ceiling of the mine from falling in on the men. The distance between sets of timber depended upon how solid the ceiling of rock was. This was continued until they came upon the coal. Sometimes the vein was not located and occasionally it was too small to be able to work. A lot of the mines had to be worked from a kneeling position and walking bent over had to be practiced. The mined coal, rock, and dirt was brought up in a bucket, or sometimes on a slope by a car on rails laid by the miners. The load was then dumped into a truck either by shoveling or by means of a chute to be sold to a small breaker along the Schuylkill River. Men lost their lives from roof cave-ins, floods, fires, or asphyxiation. This meant great hardship as well as sadness to many families because the breadwinner was gone.

One summer my Uncle Danny Murray, who was a miner, and I worked down in the mines. My father had warned me never to go down into the hole to work. We had to bend over to walk down the slope to where the vein of coal was. Uncle Danny cut a hole just large enough for us to squeeze thru. I had to shovel the coal thru the hole, and then squeeze thru to shovel the coal into a bucket to be taken to the surface by the top man who was using a windlass. One day my father, who was not working that day, took a walk over to see where I was. He saw that I was working underground. That was the last time I did that because he took me home with no questions asked.

My father was always used to rising early to go to work or get started on a project at home. Uncle Johnnie and I took a walk over to were the mines were located. He was a good conversationalist. He noticed that the chute was just about filled with ready to burn pea coal. He convinced the owner to give it to us. We told my dad we were going for coal the next day. He could hardly believe that Uncle Johnnie was actually going to do physical labor. We went over about nine in the morning and my father could not figure out how we were going to get any coal. He didn't know that all we had to do was park the borrowed truck under the chute and let it fill the truck. My father was amazed when we arrived home with the coal in such a short while.

Another way of getting coal was to walk to the coal banks. My Uncle James drove an electric dump car for years. This brought the waste to an area to be deposited. Since the breakers were not to efficient, there was a lot of lump coal in it. The people took home the lumps in wagons, wheelbarrows, or carried it on their backs to be cracked into burnable size later on.

Anthracite coal was prepared for market in breakers because the coal was mixed with rock and dirt as it came out of the mines. It had to be separated from this rock and dirt by being washed, broken down into different sizes, and run over a series of meshes or screens for sizing. As I have already mentioned my father was a slate picker. A slate (rock) picker was a young boy who sat on benches and picked out the rock from the coal. This was a dirty, dusty, tiresome job for these young boys.

Anthracite coal was broken down into different sizes by means of large iron rollers with pyramidal masses sticking out from them. The sizes were probably named after the sizes of grain. They were barley, rice, buckwheat, pea, and stove. The most popular sizes during my lifetime were pea and stove because these sizes fit the grates of the stoves we used which was a kitchen stove and a cellar furnace. When the automatic stoker was invented, it used rice coal and reducing the demand from pea and stove. Stove coal was about the size of a young person's fist.

A common sight in the backyards of Cumbola and the other towns was a pile of coal just as it emerged from the mines. This pile was known as mine-run coal. The two ways of getting mine-run was to mine it and haul it to your home which many people did. The other way was to buy the load from the miner and have the truck back into our backyard and dump it. It cost between thirty and forty dollars a load. I began to get our winter's coal in this fashion in high school, thru college, and the early years of my marriage. The tools were a screen about five feet long attached to two sturdy boards running the entire length. A scoop shovel, heavy hammer, a wheelbarrow or truck, and gloves. The hammer was used to break the large pieces of coal, the screen to catch the pea and stove coal, gloves to protect the hands, scoop shovel to throw the material onto the screen, into the wheelbarrow or truck, and the wheelbarrow or truck was used to transport the coal to the cellar. It was by no means EASY, but it did save money.

The Schuylkill River, which originates near Tuscarora, Pennsylvania flows in a southwesterly direction to Pottsville, then south to Philadelphia to join the Delaware River which empties into Delaware Bay and eventually to the Atlantic Ocean. Prior to the mining of anthracite coal, this was a beautiful and clean river teeming with fish. In preparing anthracite coal for market, a great deal of water is necessary to wash away the dirt. The breakers pumped water from the river to clean the coal, and then poured it back into the river pitch black. As a consequence, all forms of life in the river died and it was ugly to look at or be near. Cumbola, along with other towns along its course, used it as a garbage dump. Today it is not as bad as it used to be, but it will take a long time and lots of money to restore it to its former beauty.

Kemple History

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COAL

Coal played a very important part in our lives. In Shenandoah everything was heated and cooked by coal, our furnaces, our kitchen stove, everything was coal. I don't think there was a house in the town that had anything other than coal. We lived right above the Lehigh Valley Railroad tracks and during the depression coal was cheap but still people didn't have money to buy it. We were right at a grade and when the locomotives would come up there they would have to slow down. Blocks down from our house somebody would open the chutes of the coal cars; this coal would drain for miles and soon as the cars passed people would run out with their buckets and just scoop up all the coal they could get into their houses. Everybody would get their coal that way.

I remember when my uncle would come home from work everyday he would have his lunch can filled with coal. My godfather did the same thing. Everybody brought some coal home everyday. It was enough to dampen the stove off I guess in the evenings. We used to go picking coal at times. We would take a pot or a bucket, I was only a little kid. We would go to banks and pick whatever coal we could. I probably had more slate than coal. After a little while of picking before you knew it The Coal and Iron Police would come and flash a gun at you. They would threaten you with a gun. People had been shot too. We knew of people that had been shot for picking coal. It was against the law.

In the story **My Left Foot** the biggest joke of all was when the boy managed to steal some coal. They wheeled him home in the wheelbarrow with all the coal, they were so poor they didn't have coal. He was just hysterically laughing because he was just all black from the coal.

In Shenandoah we had a very poplar store called Elton's. It was a very beautiful store with very nice clothes. Somebody found a vein of coal underneath the store and they where digging under the store and bringing out coal in the night when no one else would see them. When they found out, the authorities stopped it because it was not a safe practice.

Kathleen Merchlinsky

HOW GOOD WERE "THE GOOD OLD DAYS"?

In most homes of this area there was no electricity, no indoor plumbing, and no central heating. Water was brought in from the yard, a single spigot served several families, toilets were wooden outhouses, usually each family had their own one of those. Houses were heated by coal stoves and parlor heaters, one had to develop a skill to keep them going, removing the ashes without making a mess was another feat.

Today with our electricity, indoor plumbing, thermostat heating where you just turn a dial and you have your desired temperature, we are able to enjoy a very comfortable lifestyle because of these great additions to houses.

Housekeeping was most difficult in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Washing clothes was done by hand or on a washboard, the soap was homemade and harsh on the hands, ironing was done with irons heated on the stoves, in order for the clothes to look nice they had to be dampened, several irons were kept on the stove so that when one cooled you had another one ready. Sweeping the floors was done with brooms, since the streets were dirt, this was a never ending job. Twice a year rugs were picked up and beaten outside. Preparing meals was done on coal or wood stoves, there wasn't any refrigeration, they had ice boxes to store perishables, most fruits and vegetables were canned by the lady of the house as they were in season. People baked their own bread, made their own clothes, there was little or no time for leisure.

Needless to say our lives have become easier with washers, dryers, refined materials, dishwashers, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, gas and electric stoves, microwave ovens, supermarkets, factories making our clothes, and television to fill our leisure time.

Working conditions were very hard before the unions came into being, young children were put to work long hard hours, the boys 8 and 9 years old picked slate at the mines and young girls 12 or 13 went to work in weaving mills, 10 or 12 hours a day, 6 days a week for about two dollars a week, not many people went beyond fourth grade. Gradually laws were enacted to protect children and later the unions came along to protect adults.

It seems that there were enough doctors and their fees were more than reasonable, but they did not have the miracle drugs we have today, babies were born at home and many mothers and babies died because of complications, people usually died at home, were waked and buried from their homes, too. The bodies were kept on ice several days before they were buried, the undertakers did not embalm in those days.

All in all the "good old days" were not as good as these "good new days".

Kathleen Merchlinsky

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple
with a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suite me,
And I shall spend my pension on brandy and summer gloves
And satin sandals, and say we have no money for butter.
And I shall sit down on the pavement when I'm tired
And gobble up samples in shops and press alarm bells
And run my stick along the public railings
And make up for the sobriety of my youth.
I shall go out in my slippers in the rain
And pick the flowers in other people's gardens.
and learn to spit.

You can wear terrible shirts and grow fat
And eat three pounds of sausages at a go
Or only bread and pickles for a week
And hoard pens & pencils & beermats & things in boxes.

But meanwhile we must stay respectable
And must not shame the children; they mind more,
Even than we do, being noticeable
We will keep dry with sensible clothes and spend
According to good value, and do what's best
to bring the best for us and for our children.

But maybe I ought to practice a little now?
So people who know me are not too shocked and surprised
when suddenly I am old, and start to wear purple.

Author Unknown